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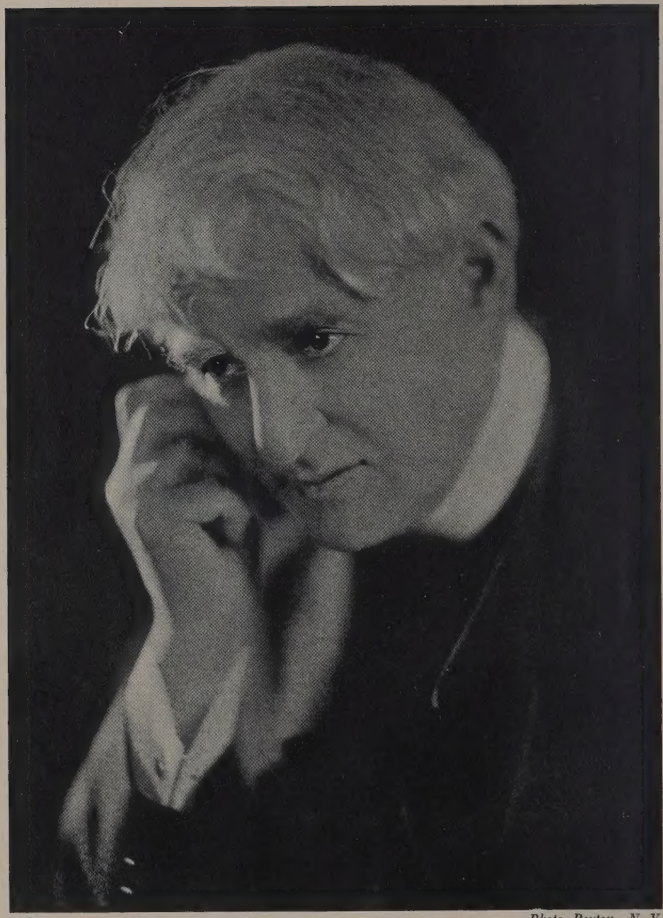
SIX PLAYS

By David Belasco



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David Belasco

SIX PLAYS

Madame Butterfly ∾ *Du Barry* ∾
The Darling of the Gods ∾ *Adrea* ∾
The Girl of the Golden West ∾
The Return of Peter Grimm

BY

DAVID BELASCO

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE AUTHOR
AND NOTES BY
MONTROSE J. MOSES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
BOSTON
1929

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By David Belasco

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AN INTRODUCTION BY DAVID BELASCO

"The Play's the thing!"

Every writer who achieves success is often asked which of his works, be they poems or plays or whatnot, is his favorite. That is a question I have never been able to answer satisfactorily. First born or latest, the fond father is, I suppose, most likely to designate as his favorite child the one which he has most recently held in his arms. So, at any rate, it is with me; my plays are the vagrant children of my love, the cherished darlings of my heart, and each one of them has been, in turn, my "favorite" — while I have been laboring to bring it forth upon the stage. If, actually, I have any special partiality it is for that one which has given me the most of pain and trouble — and which one that is I honestly cannot tell!

The little group of six plays which has been gathered together in this volume — "Madame Butterfly", "Du Barry", "The Darling of the Gods", "Adrea", "The Girl of the Golden West", and "The Return of Peter Grimm" — is fairly representative of my work as a dramatist during a period of about ten years. It is a period to which I look back with joy, — joy in the opportunity, the struggle, the achievement (no matter how far short of my aim that achievement fell). And I should be more, or less, than human if I did not feel a strengthening, heart-warming pride that now, *more than seventeen years after the first performance of the most recent of these plays of mine*, a great publishing house finds an interest and demand which warrants their issuance in the printed page.

Whatever else may be wanting in this little collection, it is neither diversity of theme nor variety of treatment. Two of the pieces portray (in strong contrast) life in Japan during the

transition period from the old rule of the Samurai to the new civilization influenced by the Occident. One depicts the rise of that extraordinary creature, Jeanette Vaubernier (La du Barry) from a Paris slum to absolute supremacy in the most luxurious, most dissolute court in modern Europe; then her fall and ruthless slaughter at the hands of her compatriots.

The fourth is a portrayal of actual life in an imaginary dependency of Rome when the great Empire had become extinguished in Western Europe and was crumbling to pieces in the East. (It was of this tragedy, "Adrea", that the greatest of modern critics wrote: "It was not meant to be read but *to be acted*.")

The fifth of these plays pictures, with perfect fidelity, the characters, life, and manners of my own dearly loved California, in the golden days of '49. And the last deals (I hope and believe rationally, comfortingly, helpfully) with the awesome mystery of our existence and that "undiscovered country" toward which inevitably we make our way: of which we know so little — from which we hope so much!

If wise old Doctor Johnson (Nestor of critics) was right when he declared that "nothing can please many and please long but just representations of general nature", then, surely, without vanity, I may feel that these dramatic labors of mine have not been in vain — because not one of the plays contained in this volume but has already received hundreds of representations before audiences more than enthusiastic: in fact, all but one of them have been so acted, literally, thousands of times. And the first of them is now more than twenty-eight years old!

In permitting the publication of these plays of mine in this form, I am aware of a danger in sacrificing the glamour of the stage; I realize that I "show the puppets dallying", that I "pluck out the heart of my mystery", — and, therefore, while appreciative of the tribute implied in their publication, I would here make a plea in mitigation and avoidance. The standards by which true literature is judged cannot properly be applied in judging drama. Ability to write well in other fields (in poetry or narrative, fiction or biography) does not necessarily imply ability to write well, or even tolerably, for the stage. Indeed,

the one talent seems generally to exclude the other; many of the greatest of writers — Milton, Cervantes, Doctor Johnson, Byron, Thackeray — have failed when they tried to write plays. A play — a genuine play — is a very distinct and special form of writing. There are many compositions extant, in the form of colloquies and dialogues, containing elements of literature such as poetry, rhetoric, and eloquence, which are nevertheless damnable as drama. And, *per contra*, there are many most excellent plays which are insignificant as literature. My plays are all written to be acted, not to be read.

Notwithstanding, the study of them in the type page may prove both interesting and instructive. The reader who will evaluate them correctly will keep ever in mind the purpose with which they were written; will visualize the thousand and one details of action, investiture, dress, and light; will, in a word, see them through his mind's eye, and, by the power of imagination, view them in movement.

There is a temptation to expand a casual introduction such as this until it might well become tedious. To that temptation I must be careful not to yield; it would be so easy to fill another volume as large as this with reminiscences of the inception, growth, and stage presentment of the plays gathered here. From my boyhood to the present day I have tried to develop genius as defined by Carlyle — the capacity for taking infinite pains. Well, at any rate, this much I know: it would be difficult, indeed, to exaggerate in statement as to the amount of thought, labor, care, and pains expended upon every one of these plays before they were finally placed before the public. Many of the brightest memories and dearest associations are bound up in them — my happiest yesterdays which point my way to confident tomorrows and give me courage and serenity to go on! Ladies and Gentlemen, you have received these plays, during the last quarter-century and more, with generous favor, upon the stages of many lands; with these few words that I have written, I now commend them to your gracious acceptance between covers, and in words of the master of all playwrights, beg you to make them kindly welcome, every one!

DAVID BELASCO

A CHRONOLOGY PLACING THE SIX PLAYS OF THIS VOLUME IN THEIR PROPER POSITION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DAVID BELASCO[1]

1895 October 9, "The Heart of Maryland." Grand Opera House, Washington, D. C.

October 22, "The Heart of Maryland." Herald Square Theatre, New York.

1897 October 5, "The First Born", by Francis Powers. Manhattan Theatre, New York.

1898 March 30, "The Heart of Maryland" company sails for London.

April 8, "The Heart of Maryland." Adelphi Theatre, London.

December 25, "Zaza", by Berton and Simon. Adapted by Belasco. Lafayette Square Opera House [Belasco Theatre]. Washington, D. C.

1899 January 9, "Zaza." Garrick Theatre, New York.

December 25, "Naughty Anthony." Columbia Theatre, Washington, D. C.

1900 January 8, "Naughty Anthony." Herald Square Theatre, New York.

* March 5, "Madame Butterfly" added to the program of "Naughty Anthony."

April 5, "Zaza" company sails for London.

April 16, "Zaza." Garrick Theatre, London.

April 28, "Madame Butterfly." Duke of York's Theatre, London.

1901 February 5, "Under Two Flags", by Paul M. Potter (from "Ouida"). Garden Theatre, New York.

[1] For a complete "Chronology of the Life of David Belasco," see the Belasco biography by William Winter (2: 473–539).

September 9, "The Auctioneer" (with Charles Klein and Lee Arthur). Hyperion Theatre, New Haven, Conn.

September 23, "The Auctioneer." Bijou Theatre, New York.

December 12, "Du Barry." New National Theatre, Washington, D. C.

* December 25, "Du Barry." Criterion Theatre, New York.

1902 September 29, Belasco Theatre (the Republic), New York, opens with "Du Barry."

November 17, "The Darling of the Gods" (with John Luther Long). New National Theatre, Washington, D. C.

* December 3, "The Darling of the Gods." Belasco Theatre, New York.

1903 November 23, "Sweet Kitty Bellairs." (From "The Bath Comedy", by the Egerton Castles.) Belasco Theatre, Washington, D. C.

December 9, "Sweet Kitty Bellairs." Belasco Theatre, New York.

December 28, "The Darling of the Gods." His Majesty's Theatre, London.

1904 September 12, "The Music Master" (Klein-Belasco). Young's Pier Theatre, Atlantic City, N. J.

September 26, "The Music Master." Belasco Theatre, New York.

December 26, "Adrea." (Belasco-Long). Convention Hall, Washington, D. C.

1905 * January 11, "Adrea." Belasco Theatre. New York.

October 3, "The Girl of the Golden West." Belasco Theatre, Pittsburgh, Pa.

* November 14, "The Girl of the Golden West." Belasco Theatre, New York.

1906 November 12, Puccini. "Madame Butterfly" (in English). Henry W. Savage Opera Company, Garden Theatre, New York.

November 12, "The Rose of the Rancho" (Belasco-Tully). Majestic Theatre, Boston, Mass.
November 27, "The Rose of the Rancho." Belasco Theatre, New York.
December 5, Cornerstone laid of Belasco Stuyvesant Theatre, New York.

1907 February 11, "Madama Butterfly." Metropolitan Opera House, New York.
September 23, "A Grand Army Man" (Belasco, Phelps, Short). Hyperion Theatre, New Haven, Conn.
October 16, "A Grand Army Man." Opening of the new Belasco Theatre, New York.
November 18, "The Warrens of Virginia", by William C. DeMille. Lyric Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa.
December 3, "The Warrens of Virginia." Belasco Theatre, New York.

1908 September 7, "The Fighting Hope", by W. J. Hurlbut. Belasco Theatre, Washington, D. C.
September 22, "The Fighting Hope." Stuyvesant Theatre, New York.
December 31, "The Easiest Way", by Eugene Walter. Parson's Theatre, Hartford, Conn.

1909 January 19, "The Easiest Way." Stuyvesant Theatre, New York.
August 16, "Is Matrimony a Failure?" (Adaptation by Leo Ditrichstein.) Savoy Theatre, Atlantic City, N. J.
August 23, "Is Matrimony a Failure?" Belasco (Republic) Theatre, New York.
December 6, "The Lily." (Adaptation from the French of Wolff and Leroux.) Belasco Theatre, Washington, D. C.
December 23, "The Lily." Stuyvesant Theatre, New York.

1910 January 17, "Just a Wife", by Eugene Walter. Colonial Theatre, Cleveland, Ohio.
January 31, "Just a Wife." Belasco (Republic) Theatre, New York.

September 19, "The Concert." (Ditrichstein adaptation of Bahr.) Nixon Theatre, Pittsburgh, Pa.

October 10, "The Concert." Belasco (Stuyvesant) Theatre, New York.

October 24, "Nobody's Widow", by Avery Hopwood. Euclid Avenue Opera House, Cleveland, Ohio.

November 14, "Nobody's Widow." Hudson Theatre, New York.

December 10, "La Fanciulla del West" (Puccini). Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

1911 January 2, "The Return of Peter Grimm." Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, Mass.

April 17, "The Woman", by William C. DeMille. New National Theatre, Washington, D. C.

September 19, "The Woman." Belasco (Republic) Theatre, New York.

* October 18, "The Return of Peter Grimm." Belasco (Stuyvesant) Theatre, New York.

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SIX PLAYS

By David Belasco

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Mr. Belasco's "The Heart of Maryland", a vein reminiscent of "The Girl I Left Behind Me", which he had written with Franklyn Fyles in 1892, was produced in Washington, D. C., on October 9, 1895, and was shortly brought to the Herald Square Theatre, New York, where, on October 22, 1895, Mrs. Leslie Carter began her sensational swing from a church belfry bell — a feat which she was to carry on for over two hundred consecutive nights. This Civil War drama, in the same category with Bronson Howard's "Shenandoah" and William Gillette's "Secret Service", was taken on tour with great success, and aided in giving prestige to its author at a time when, in theatrical history, he was facing his severest struggle with the Theatrical Trust.

The next production by Mr. Belasco was "The First Born", by Francis Powers, which had been produced in San Francisco, under the management of Frederick Belasco, a brother, and was seen by him when he went West, during the summer of 1897. He purchased the rights for himself and Charles Frohman, with whom he was more or less associated at the time. "The First Born" was brought to the Manhattan Theatre, New York, on October 5, 1897. The production revealed two interests in David Belasco: his love for San Francisco, and his intimate knowledge of its Chinatown life; it also showed, as a producer, his punctilious care in the handling of picturesque detail, and his painstaking study of atmosphere through the manipulation of light and color.

The success of this exotic piece, and the fact that Charles Frohman was a recognized theatre power in London, made it possible for Mr. Belasco to take "The First Born" to England, the venture under the joint management of the two. He sailed,

October 23, 1897, and opened at the Duke of York's Theatre, November 6. But Mr. William A. Brady had forestalled any possible run of a second Chinese play by hastening to London with "The Cat and the Cherub", based on a story by Chester Bailey Fernald. The failure of this attempt did not deter Frohman in his intentions to give Mr. Belasco another opening with the London public. Negotiations were begun and consummated with the Messrs. Gatti, for the Adelphi Theatre run of "The Heart of Maryland", which the American public had paid over a million dollars to see, and which was sufficient guarantee — according to the theatrical philosophy and logic of the time — of its popular appeal. Mr. Belasco sailed with his company on March 30, 1898, and opened on April 8, his original engagement of a month being extended to twelve weeks.

It was while there that the American manager had brought to his attention the acclaim given to Madame Rejane, in Paris, for her "Zaza", by Berton and Simon, running at the Vaudeville Theatre. Mr. Belasco made a special trip to see it, and secured the American rights. His capable version, made for Mrs. Carter, resulted in one of his most characteristic and effective adaptations. It began its long run in New York, at the Garrick Theatre, January 9, 1899.

On January 11, the death of Mr. Belasco's mother — between whom and himself there had existed curious psychic bonds, evinced to him in many striking incidents in his early life — may be said to be the beginning of "The Return of Peter Grimm." However much Mr. Belasco may have adapted himself to the exigencies of the theatre business as organized in New York, there were certain dominant interests in his life, and these persistently attracted him and actuated his career. The plays in this volume very well illustrate them, and it is proper to lead up to the production of "Madame Butterfly" in this way, so as to show how definitely his tastes were accentuated, even so early in his managerial ventures as this.

An old-time friendship with the mother of Miss Blanche Bates made David Belasco anxious that the daughter should come under his direction. The many forces of fate were working and

concentrating toward the commencement of the playwright's most characteristic period. Miss Bates was engaged for "Naughty Anthony", seen in Washington, December 25, 1899, and brought to the New York Herald Square Theatre on January 8, 1900. It was a farce, reminiscent of some earlier work he had done, and of it Mr. Belasco himself wrote:

At the time . . . the country was farce mad, — but the public will not accept me as a farce writer, and it was a failure. I believed at the time, that had somebody else produced my play, it might have succeeded, and this actually proved to be the case; for when I sold the piece and it was taken on the road, with my name omitted from the program, it made money, although it had cost me a pretty penny. I soon saw that "Naughty Anthony" must be withdrawn or something added to the bill in order to keep it going.

That something happened to be "Madame Butterfly." A short play was needed — and needed quickly — to add to the bill, to warrant its continuing in the theatre. "Madame Butterfly" was this after-piece. Some time before, a stranger had called Mr. Belasco's attention to a story by John Luther Long, a Philadelphia lawyer, with pronounced talent for writing. It was a Japanese tragedy, and he wrote the author, who at the time was unknown to him, making an offer for the rights of dramatization. Mr. Belasco found out afterwards that Miss Maude Adams and Miss Julia Marlowe had both tried to secure the rights to "Madame Butterfly", but that Mr. Long had decided on him because he was to write the play himself. There is a mistaken notion that the resultant script was a collaboration. In so far as the main theme and atmosphere were drawn from Mr. Long's book, this may be regarded as so. But, even before a contract had been drawn up, the dramatist had half completed his script, and within a fortnight it was finished, the scenery was painted and rehearsals had begun. And after all, did not the novel, "Madame Butterfly", have a source in Pierre Loti's "Madame Chrysanthème?"

Mr. Belasco recognized instantly that the story of "Madame Butterfly" was not material for a full-length play; but he soon

saw that its time element required some halting of the action to denote the *passage* of time. As a stage producer, his ingenuity was called into action; and it is this ingenuity which is so large a part of his genius as a producer. Nothing Mr. Belasco relishes more than a challenge to his technical originality. He can do certain small things which have their large emotional and large spiritual effects. These take the place of many pages of dialogue. And that is why so large a part of a Belasco play depends on its visualization, and cannot be denoted in the printed version. One must always judge his scene by its effectiveness in projection. The Playwright and Producer have always worked hand in hand.

"Madame Butterfly" was given its première at the Herald Square Theatre, New York, March 5, 1900, and was immediately recognized as a triumph of beauty and a complete mastery of atmospheric detail. It is necessary to emphasize the experimental side of Mr. Belasco's stagecraft — which side entitles him to a dominant position in the creative advance of the American theatre. He made two *coups* in this little play alone that gave considerable food for theatrical thought. A prophet is never a prophet in his own country. Had the same innovations — not new but never before tried in America — come with the stamp of Europe upon them, they would still loom large as epochal in stage technique before the era of the "new" stagecraft. In his book, "The Theatre Through its Stage Door", Mr. Belasco writes:

I have been asked many times what I consider my most successful achievement in stirring imagination through the agencies of acting. I invariably reply that the scene of the passing of an entire night in "Madame Butterfly" has been my most successful effort in appealing to the imaginations of those who have sat before my stage. In that scene, the little Japanese heroine is waiting with her child for its father, Lieutenant Pinkerton, to come from the American ship. The vigil represented an entire night. To portray this episode, Blanche Bates was compelled to hold the stage for fourteen minutes without uttering a word. So, to keep an audience's imagination stirred — to persuade it that what it was witnessing was real — it was necessary to have

a scene of changing beauty. There was not a dissenting voice in the criticism of that scene. My experiment was hazardous, but it succeeded, and its success was due entirely to its imaginative appeal. The secret of its fascination lay in my use of lights.

It was in this production also that Mr. Belasco, in order to create fully a Japanese atmosphere, resorted to the use of a series of curtains, showing a rice field, a garden, and other views — preliminary and leading up to the scene of the play itself, a use of the "new" art before its time, for this was the year 1900. The object of this accessory was to saturate his audience in atmosphere, to transport them into the locale of the play.

On April 5, 1900, Mr. Belasco took Mrs. Carter and "Zaza" to London, where the latter was given at the Garrick Theatre, April 16. It was during this engagement that arrangements were made for the initial British production of "Madame Butterfly." Since Mr. Belasco did not think it feasible at this time to send for Miss Bates — much to her disappointment — an English company was assembled, and the little drama was given as an afterpiece to Jerome K. Jerome's "Miss Hobbs", the reigning success of the Duke of York's Theatre. The opening date was April 28, 1900. Among the first-night audience was Puccini. It was then that the opera began, for behind the scenes, when the composer and dramatist met, there was sealed a verbal agreement, a preliminary to a formal contract.

The playlet was vociferously greeted; it was proclaimed a rare theatrical find, a gem of simplicity. Some thought its dénouement so poignant that it should, like Greek convention, take place offstage. In the meantime Puccini completed the work on the score that rang in his heart all through its first performance; and it is curious that when the libretto was done — extended to suit the conventions of opera — and the score ready, it was first given an American production in English by the Henry W. Savage Company at the Garden Theatre, New York, November 12, 1906. Not until February 11, 1907, was it heard in Italian, at the Metropolitan Opera House, and it was

while watching Miss Geraldine Farrar, in the rôle of *Cio-Cio-San*, that Mr. Belasco felt a great dramatic artist was submerged in the opera singer. "Madama Butterfly" had been given its première, on any stage, at La Scala, February 17, 1904.

This, then, is the stage history of "Madame Butterfly" — a playlet that did many things, a Japanese "*concept exquis*" that wiped out the losses of a Chinese failure; a story that brought into future collaboration a novelist and a dramatist; a garniture that at once established Mr. Belasco as a stage innovator of prime importance. "Madame Butterfly" proved to be an endeavor which led to the writing of "The Darling of the Gods."

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Founded on

John Luther Long's Story

All stage, screen and amateur rights for the production of this play are controlled by the author. No performances or public readings whatsoever may be given without written consent from him.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

A TRAGEDY OF JAPAN

By David Belasco

(Founded on John Luther Long's Story)

CAST

Cho-Cho-San (*Madame Butterfly*)	Blanche Bates
Suzuki, *her servant*	Marie Bates
Mr. Sharpless, *the American Consul*	Claude Gillingwater
Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton, *of the warship "Connecticut"*	Frank Worthing
Yamadori, *a citizen of New York*	Albert Bruning
Nakodo, *a marriage broker*	E. P. Wilks
Kate, *Pinkerton's wife*	Katherine Black
Trouble	Little Kittie
Attendant	William Lamp
Attendant	Westropp Saunders

The play takes place in Japan in Madame Butterfly's little house at the foot of Higashi Hill, facing the harbor.

NOTE. During the scene in which Madame Butterfly waits at the shoji for her lover, a night is supposed to pass and the story is picked up on the morning of the following day.

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Duke of York's Theatre, London

CAST

Cho-Cho-San (*Madame Butterfly*)	Evelyn Millard
Mr. Sharpless	Claude Gillingwater
Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton	Allan Aynesworth
Yamadori	William H. Day
Nakodo	J. C. Buckstone
Suzuki	Susie Vaughan
Kate (*Mrs. Pinkerton*)	Janet Evelyn Sothern

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

PUCCINI'S OPERA, AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 11, 1907

CAST

CIO-CIO-SAN	Geraldine Farrar
SUZUKI	Louise Homer
KATE (*Mrs. Pinkerton*)	Helen Mapleson
LA CUGINA	Estelle Shearman
LA MADRE	Josephine Jacoby
LA ZIA	Katherine Moran
LIEUTENANT PINKERTON	Enrico Caruso
MR. SHARPLESS	Antonio Scotti
GORO	Albert Reiss
YAMADORI	Giovanni Paroli
LO ZIO BONZO	Adolf Mühlmann
YAKUSIDE	Giulio Rossi
IL COMMISSARIO IMPERIALE	Bernard Bégué
UN UFFICIALE DEL REGISTRO	Francesco Navarini

MADAME BUTTERFLY

The play takes place in Japan in Madame Butterfly's little house at the foot of Higashi Hill, facing the harbor. Everything in the room is Japanese save the American locks and bolts on the doors and windows and an American flag fastened to a tobacco jar. Cherry blossoms are abloom outside, and inside. A sword rack, a shrine on which lie a sword and a pair of men's slippers, a chest of drawers on top of which is a tray containing two red poppies, rouge, powder and hair ornaments, a stand for the tobacco jar and tea, are the only pieces of furniture in the room. As the curtain rises, Madame Butterfly is spraying the growing flowers with a small watering pot. She snips off two little bunches, lays them on a plate of rice which she sets reverently on the shrine, then kneels, putting her hands on the floor, her forehead on them.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Oh, Shaka! Hail! Hail! Also perceive! Look down! I have brought a sacrifice of flowers and new rice. Also, I am quite clean. I am shivering with cleanness. Therefore grant that Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton may come back soon.

(*She rises, claps her hands, comes down to a floor cushion, and sits, fanning herself.*)

SUZUKI (*Entering with a low bow*). Madame Butterfly's wish?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Suzuki, inform me, if it please you, how much more nearer beggary we are to-day than yesterday?

SUZUKI. Aye. (*She takes some coins from a small box in her sleeve, and lays them in three piles on her palm, touching them as she speaks.*) Rin, yen, sen. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Reprovingly*). Suzuki, how many time I tellin' you — no one shall speak anythin' but those Unite' State' languages in these Lef-ten-ant Pik-ker-ton's house? (*She pronounces his name with much difficulty.*) Once more

— an' I put you outside shoji! . . . That's one thin' aeverbody got recomlec' account it's 'Merican house — his wife, his maid.

SUZUKI (*Mouthing to herself, making no sound, counting on her fingers*). Two dollar.

(*She drops the money into the box, giving it to Madame Butterfly.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, how we waste my husban's be-autiful moaneys! Tha's shame! Mos' gone.

SUZUKI. This moaney hav' kep' us two year. . . . Wha's happen to us now, if he don' come back?

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Scoffing, putting the money in her sleeve*). O, if he don' come back! . . . Course he come back! He's gone so long accoun' he's got business in those his large country. If he's not come back to his house, why he sign Japanese lease for nine hundred and ninety-nine year for me to live? Why he put 'Merican lock to bolt it door, to shut it window? Answer me those question.

SUZUKI (*Doubtfully*). I dunno.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Of course you dunno! You don' know whichaever. Wael I goin' tell you: to keep out those which are out, and in, those which are in. Tha's me.

(*She rises, goes to the window and looks out.*)

SUZUKI. But he don't writin' no ledder.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. 'Merican men don' naever write ledder — no time.

SUZUKI (*Cynically*). Aye . . . I don' naever know 'Merica navy man with Japanese wive come back.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Impassively, her eyes narrowing*). Speak concerning marriage once more, you die! (*She fans herself. Suzuki salaams and backs quickly toward the door. Madame Butterfly claps her hands and Suzuki pauses.*) Don' come back! Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton don' come back! Ha! Me! I know w'en he comes back — he told me. W'en he goin' 'way, he say in tha's doors: "Madame Butterfly, I have had ver' nice times with my Japanese sweets heart, so now I goin' back to my own country and here's moaney — an' don' worry 'bout me — I come back w'en 'Robins nes'

again!'" Ha-ha! Tha's w'en he come back — w'en robins nes' again.

(*She sways her head triumphantly from side to side, fanning herself.*)

SUZUKI (*Not impressed*). Yaes, I didn't like ways he said it — like those . . .

(*She imitates a flippant gesture of farewell.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Laughing*). Aha, that's 'Merican way sayin' good-bye to girl. Yaes, he come back w'en robins nes' again. Shu'h! Shu'h! (*She claps her hands with delight. Suzuki, with a look of unbelief, starts to go.*) Sa-ey! Why no "shu'h" on you face for? Such a fools! (*Looking towards the window.*) O look! Suzuki — a robins. The firs' these Spring! Go, see if he's stay for nes'.

SUZUKI (*Looking*). It *is* a robins, O Cho-Cho-San!

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Running to the window*). O! O!

SUZUKI. But he's fly away.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O! How they are slow this year! Sa-ey, see if you don' fin' one tha's more in-dus-trial an' domestics.

SUZUKI (*Looking out*). There are none yet.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. But soon they nes' now. Suzuki, w'en we see that ship comin' in — sa-ey — then we goin' put flowers aevery where, an' if it's night, we goin' hang up mos' one thousan' lanterns — eh-ha?

SUZUKI. No got moaney for thousan'.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Wael, twenty, mebby; an' sa-ey, w'en we see him comin' quick up path — (*imitates*) so — so — so — (*lifts her kimono and strides in a masculine fashion*) to look for liddle wive — me — me jus' goin' hide behind shoji (*making two holes with her wet finger in the low paper shoji and peeking through*) an' watch an' make believe me gone 'way; leave liddle note — sayin': "Goon-bye, sayonara, Butterfly." . . . Now he come in. . . . (*Hides.*) Ah! An' then he get angery! An' he say all kinds of 'Merican languages — debbils — hells! But before he get too angery, me run out an' flew aroun' his neck! (*She illustrates with Suzuki, who is carried*

away and embraces her with fervor.) Sa-ey! *You* no flew roun' his neck — jus' me. (*They laugh in each other's arms.*) Then he'll sit down an' sing tha's liddle 'Merican song — O, how he'll laugh. . . . (*She sings as though not understanding a word of it.*)

"I call her the belle of Japan — of Japan,
Her name it is O Cho-Cho-San, Cho-Cho-San!
Such tenderness lies in her soft almond eyes,
I tell you, she's just 'ichi ban.'"

(*Laughs.*) Then I'll dance like w'en I was Geisha girl.

(*She dances as Sharpless, the American consul, appears in the doorway, followed by the Nakodo.*)

NAKODO. This is the house, your Excellency.

SHARPLESS (*Removing his clogs outside*). You may wait.

(*Nakodo bows and Sharpless enters.*)

I beg pardon. . . .

(*Madame Butterfly, still dancing, begins the song again. Sharpless goes to the door and knocks to attract her attention.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ah!

(*Suzuki, bowing low, leaves the room.*)

SHARPLESS. This is Madame Cho-Cho-San?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, I am Mrs. Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pikker-ton.

SHARPLESS. I see. . . . Pardon my interruption. . . . I am Mr. Sharpless, the American consul.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Once more salaaming to the ground, drawing in her breath between her teeth to express pleasure*). O, your honorable excellency, goon night — no, not night yaet: aexcuse me, I'm liddle raddle', — I mean goon mornin', goon evenin'. Welcome to 'Merican house, mos' welcome to 'Merican girl! (*Pointing to herself. They both bow.*) Be seat. (*Sharpless sits on a cushion on the floor, and Madame Butterfly sits at a little distance. There is a slight pause.*) How are those health? You sleepin' good? How are that honorable ancestors — are they well? And those parens'? That grandmother — how are she?

SHARPLESS. Thanks. They're all doing well, I hope.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*She claps her hands; Suzuki enters and puts the little stand between them and leaves the room*). Accep' pipe, your Excellency. O, I forgettin' — I have still of those large American cigarette.

(*Madame Butterfly gestures towards Pinkerton's tobacco jar decorated with the flag of his country.*)

SHARPLESS (*Accepting a cigarette while she fills her pipe*). Thanks. I'm on a little visit of inquiry, Madame Butterfly, — your name, I believe, in our language. Lieutenant Pinkerton wrote to me to find out —

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Almost breathless*). Ah, you have hear from him? He is well?

SHARPLESS. O, he's all right.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Relieved*). Ah! Tha's mak' me mos' bes' happy female woman in Japan — mebby in that whole worl' — w'at you thing?

SHARPLESS. Ha — ha! (*Puffing at the cigarette.*) Sawdust. Pinkerton must have left these!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O! I so glad you came. . . . I goin' as' you a liddle question.

SHARPLESS. Well?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. You know 'bout birds in those your country?

SHARPLESS. Something.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha's what I thing — you know aevery-thing. Tha's why your country sen' you here.

SHARPLESS. You flatter me.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, no, you got big head.

SHARPLESS. Pinkerton again — I can hear him!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, aexcuse me: I forgettin' my manners. I got liddle more raddle. (*She offers him her pipe which he gravely touches, returning it. She touches it again, then puts it down.*) Now, what you know 'bout jus' robins?

SHARPLESS. What?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. 'Bout when do they nes' again? Me, I thing it mus' be mor' early in Japan as in America, accoun' they nestin' here now.

SHARPLESS. O, at the same time, I fancy.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Disappointed*). Yaes? . . . then they's nestin' there. (*Then taking hope again.*) Sa-ey, I tell you — perhaps some time sooner, some time later, jus' how they feel like.

SHARPLESS. Possibly. Why do you ask?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Because Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton say he will come back to me w'en the robins nes' again.

SHARPLESS (*To himself*). Poor devil! One of his infernal jokes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Clapping her hands*). Me, I thing it's time. . . . I've wait so long.

(*Suzuki enters with a tea-pot. Madame Butterfly gives Sharpless a cup of tea.*)

NAKODO (*Appearing at the door*). Tea, most illustrious?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ah! Enter, Nakodo. Your presence lights up my entire house. (*She gives him a cup. Accepting it, he goes up to a cushion and sits.*) Tha's bad man. W'en my husban's gone 'way, he try for get me marry again.

NAKODO. The rich Yamadori. Madame Cho-Cho-San is very poor.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Bowing politely*). O, liddle ol' frien'; those are my business.

NAKODO. Rejected advice makes the heart sad.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. We-el, if those heart hurt you so much, you better not arrive here no more.

SHARPLESS. Madame Butterfly; may I ask — er — where are your people?

NAKODO. They have outcasted her!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Sa-ey, tha's foanny! My people make me marry when I don' want; now I am marry, they don' want. Before I marry Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton, my honorable Father —(*she bows low — Nakodo bows — Sharpless bows*) die — he's officer. These are his sword . . . (*pointing to an inscription*) 'tis written. . . .

(*She holds out the sword that the inscription may be read.*)

NAKODO (*Reading*). "To die with honor, when one can no longer live with honor."

(*He bows, then turns and bows towards the shrine and goes back to his cushion where he sits.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He's kill' himself accoun' he soldier of Emporer an' defeat in battle. Then we get — O — ver' poor. Me? I go dance liddle. Also I thing if some rich man wish me, I gettin' marry for while, accoun' my grandmother, (*she bows respectfully — Nakodo bows — Sharpless politely nods*) don' got no food, no obi. Then ol' Nakodo, he say a (*Nakodo picks up his cushion and moves down to join in the conversation*) man's jus' as' him for nice wive for three monse. Nakodo tell him he don' know none more nizer as me.

NAKODO (*Salaaming*). Nizer as you.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Salaaming*). Nizer as me.

SHARPLESS (*Looking from one to the other*). Couldn't be nicer! . . .

(*He salaams profoundly — then all salaam.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Then Nakodo say —

NAKODO. I say — I don' lig him account he 'Merica — jin.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He also remark with me that he is barbarian an' beas'. But aeveryone say: "Yaes, take him — take him beas' — he's got moaneys." So I say for jus' liddle while, perhaps I can stan'. So Nakodo bring him. . . .

NAKODO. . . . For look-at meeting.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Laughing*). Me? Well, I thing that day Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton is jus' a god! Gold button — lace on his unicorn. At firs', I frightened — he hol' my hans' so close — like —(*she illustrates by giving both hands to Sharpless*) and kizz. Japanese girl no lig' kizz; but when Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton kizz me, I like ver' much. . . . What's use lie? It's not inside of me. (*Noticing that her hands are still in Sharpless'.*) O, I beg your honorable pardon. (*She tucks her hands in her sleeves.*) So we's gettin' marry and then his ship order away an' me — I am jus' waitin' — sometimes cryin', sometimes watchin', but always waitin'.

NAKODO (*In the doorway — bowing with servility*). My client, the prosperous Yamadori, approaches for the third time to-day.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Now I have my liddle joke again. You watch, he comes all time to make smash with me.

SHARPLESS. Pinkerton's slang.

(*Yamadori enters, attended by two servants. Sharpless rises and bows ceremoniously. Madame Butterfly does not rise, but bends her head and fans herself coquettishly. The two servants squat.*)

YAMADORI. Mr. Sharpless: always a pleasure to meet you here or in New York.

SHARPLESS. Thanks, Mr. Yamadori.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Coquettishly*). You have somethin' nize say to me again to-day?

YAMADORI. Perseverance shall be the religion of my life until the capricious Butterfly deigns to believe me.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. You goin' tell me 'gain you kill yourself I don' make kizz with you?

YAMADORI (*Very much embarrassed — looking at consul*). O!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. You can speak — consul know — I been tellin' him 'bout your liddle foolishness.

YAMADORI. Such treatment, Mr. Sharpless, is one of the penalties we incur when madly in love with a charming woman.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha's ver' nize. Ha-ha!

(*Winks behind her fan at Sharpless.*)

SHARPLESS. Heavens! Pinkerton's very wink.

(*Madame Butterfly gives a cup of tea to Yamadori who drinks it and rolls a cigarette.*)

YAMADORI (*To Sharpless*). I am in Japan for two months — a pleasure trip. Do you blame me?

(*Pointing to Madame Butterfly.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Aevery time he come home, get 'nother woman: must have mor'en eight now.

YAMADORI. But I *married* them all. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O *he!* He jus' marry whenaever he thing 'bout it.

YAMADORI. You shall be different. I will bury *you* with my ancestors. (*To Sharpless.*) I offered her a thousand servants.

NAKODO (*Stunned*). Thousan'!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ha! (*Fans.*)

YAMADORI. And a palace to live in.

(*The Nakodo is overcome by such generosity.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He!

YAMADORI. Everything her heart can wish.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Ha! Ha!

YAMADORI. Is that not enough? (*She shakes her head.*) Then in the presence of this statesman of integrity, I will give you a solemn writing. (*Sharpless gives him a quizzical glance.*) Is *that* enough?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Wha's good of that to married womans? (*Pointing to herself.*)

YAMADORI. According to the laws of Japan, when a woman is deserted, she is divorced. (*Madame Butterfly stops fanning and listens.*) Though I have travelled much abroad, I know the laws of my own country.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. An' I know laws of my *husban's* country.

YAMADORI (*To Sharpless*). She still fancies herself married to the young officer. If your Excellency would explain. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*To Sharpless*). Sa-ey, when some one gettin' married in America, don' he stay marry?

SHARPLESS. Usually — yes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Well, tha's all right. I'm marry to Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton.

YAMADORI. Yes, but a Japanese marriage!

SHARPLESS. Matrimony is a serious thing in America, not a temporary affair as it often is here.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Yaes, an' you can't like 'Merican mans. Japanese got too many wive, eh?

SHARPLESS (*Laughing*). We are not allowed more than one at a time.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Yaes, an' you can't divorce wive like here, by sayin': "walk it back to parent" — eh?

SHARPLESS. O, no.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha's right, aexactly. When I as' Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton, he explain those law to me of gettin' divorce in those Unite' State'. He say no one can

get aexcept he stan' up before Judge 2 — 3 — 4 — 7 — year. Ver' tiresome. Firs' the man he got tell those Judge all he know 'bout womans; then womans, she got tell; then some lawyer quarrel with those Judge; the Judge get jury an' as' wha' they thing — an' if they don' know, they'll all get put in jails. Tha's all right! (*Folds hands.*)

YAMADORI. Your friend has told her everything she wanted him to tell her.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Who has paid no attention*). Tha's ver' nize, too, that 'Merican God.

SHARPLESS. I beg your pardon?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Once times, Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton —

YAMADORI (*Aside to Sharpless*). Pinkerton again!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. He's in great troubles, an' he said "God he'p me"; an' sunshine *came right out* — and God he did! Tha's ver' quick — Japanese gods take more time. Aevery-thing quick in America. Ha — me — sometime I thing I pray large American God to get him back soon; but no use, — he don' know me where *I* live. (*Attracted by a sound.*) Wha's that? . . . You hear?

SHARPLESS. No. (*Madame Butterfly runs to the window and listens; then takes up the glasses while Sharpless speaks in a low voice to Yamadori.*) Lieutenant Pinkerton's ship was due yesterday. His young wife from America is waiting here to meet him. (*At the word "wife," Yamadori smiles — takes his fan from his sleeve and fans himself. The Nakodo, who is listening, is struck by an idea and departs in such haste that he tumbles over one of Yamadori's attendants who jabbers at him.*) I'm devilish sorry for that girl.

YAMADORI. Then tell her the truth.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Aexcuse me; but I always hearin' soun' like ship gun — ha — ha — tha's naturels.

YAMADORI (*Preparing to go*). Good morning, Mr. Sharpless. (*Shaking hands. Turning to Madame Butterfly.*) I leave you to-day. To-morrow the gods may prompt you to listen to me! (*He bows.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Bowing*). Mebby. (*Yamadori and attendants go off, bowing. She turns to Sharpless.*) Mebby not. Sa-ey, somehow couldn't you let that Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pikker-ton know they's other all crazy 'bout me?

SHARPLESS. Madame Butterfly, sit down. (*While she, struck by his solemn manner, looks at him and obeys, he removes the tea-pot and sits on the stand, to the astonishment of Madame Butterfly.*) I am going to read you part of a letter I have received from Pinkerton.

(*He takes a letter from his pocket.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. O, jus' let me look at those ledder! (*She slips it under her kimono on her heart and with an indrawn breath, hands it back.*) Now read quick, you mos' bes' nize man in all the whole worl'.

SHARPLESS (*Reads*). "Find out about that little Jap girl. What has become of her? It might be awkward now. If little Butterfly still remembers me, perhaps you can help me out and make her understand. Let her down gently. You won't believe it, but for two weeks after I sailed, I was dotty in love with her."

(*Sharpless is amazed to see Madame Butterfly convulsed with silent joy.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Oh, all the gods how it was sweet!

SHARPLESS. Why really —

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha's what I'm afraid: that he loave' me so much he's goin' desert his country an' get in trouble with American eagle — what you thing? Oh, it's more bedder I wait than those!

SHARPLESS (*Folding the letter*). No use — you can't understand. Madame Butterfly, suppose this waiting should never end; what would become of you?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Me? I could dance, mebby, or — die?

SHARPLESS. Don't be foolish. I advise you to consider the rich Yamadori's offer.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Astonished*). *You* say those? You, 'Merican consul? — when you know that me, I am marry?

SHARPLESS. You heard Yamadori: it is not binding.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Yamadori lies!

SHARPLESS. His offer is an unusual opportunity for a girl who — for any Japanese girl in your circumstances.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Enraged — she claps her hands*). Suzuki! The excellent gentleman —(*bowing sarcastically*) who have done us the honor to call — he wish to go hurriedly. His shoes — hasten them!

(*Suzuki, who has entered carrying a jar, gets Sharpless' clogs and gives them to him — then passes off with her jar.*)

SHARPLESS (*Holding the clogs awkwardly*). I'm really very sorry.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, no, don' be angery. But jus' now you tol' me — O, gods! You mean — (*Looks at him pitifully.*) I not Lef-ten-ant B. F. Pik-ker-ton's wive — Me?

SHARPLESS. Hardly.

MADAME BUTTERFLY O, I — (*She sways slightly. Sharpless goes to her assistance, but she recovers and fans herself.*) Tha's all right. I got liddle heart illness. I can't . . . I can't someways give up thingin' he'll come back to me. You thing tha's all over? All finish? (*Dropping her fan. Sharpless nods assent.*) Oh, no! Loave don' forget some thin's or wha's use of loave? (*She claps her hands — beckoning off.*) Loave's got remember . . . (*pointing*) some thin's!

(*A child enters.*)

SHARPLESS. A child. . . . Pinkerton's? . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Showing a picture of Pinkerton's*). Look! Look! (*Holding it up beside the child's face.*) Tha's jus' his face, same hair, same blue eye. . . .

SHARPLESS. Does Lieutenant Pinkerton know?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, he come after he goe. (*Looking at the child with pride.*) You thing fath-er naever comes back — tha's what *you* thing? He do! You write him ledder; tell him 'bout one bes' mos' nize bebby aever seen. . . . Ha — ha! I bed all moaneys he goin' come mos' one million mile for see those chil'. Surely this is tie — bebby. Sa-ey, you didn' mean what you said 'bout me not bein' marry? You make liddle joke? (*Moved, Sharpless nods his head in assent,*

to the great relief of Madame Butterfly.) Ha! (*She lays the baby's hand in Sharpless'.*) Shake hand consul 'Merican way.

SHARPLESS (*Shaking hands with the child.*) Hm . . . hm . . . what's your name?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Trouble. Japanese bebby always change it name. I was thinkin' some day w'en he come back, change it to Joy.

SHARPLESS. Yes . . . yes . . . I'll let him know.
(*Glad to escape, he takes an abrupt departure.*)

SUZUKI (*In the distance, wailing*). Ay . . . ay . . . ay . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Tha's wail . . .

SUZUKI (*Nearer*). O, Cho-Cho-San! (*Madame Butterfly goes to the door to meet Suzuki.*) Cho-Cho-San!

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Speak!

SUZUKI. We are shamed through the town. The Nakodo —

NAKODO (*Appearing*). I but said the child — (*he points to the baby, whom Madame Butterfly instinctively shelters in her arms*) was a badge of shame to his father. In his country, there are homes for such unfortunates and they never rise above the stigma of their class. They are shunned and cursed from birth.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Who has listened stolidly — now with a savage cry, pushing him away from her until he loses his balance and falls to the floor.*) You lie!

NAKODO (*On the floor*). But Yamadori —

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Touching her father's sword*). Lies! Lies! Lies! Say again, I kill! Go . . . (*The Nakodo goes quickly.*) Bebby, he lies . . . Yaes, it's lie. . . . When your fath-er knows how they speak, he will take us 'way from bad people to his own country. I am finish here. (*Taking the American flag from the tobacco jar and giving it to the child.*) Tha's your country — your flag. Now wave like fath-er say w'en excite — wave like "hell!" (*Waves the child's hand.*) Ha'rh! Ha'rh! (*A ship's gun is heard.*) Ah! (*Madame Butterfly and Suzuki start for the balcony. Madame Butterfly runs back for the child as the gun is heard again; then returning*

to the shoji, looks through the glasses.) Look! Look! Warship! Wait . . . can't see name. . . .

SUZUKI. Let me —

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No! Ah! Name is "Con-nec-ti-cut"! His ship! He's come back! He's come back! (*Laughing, she embraces Suzuki — then sinks to the floor.*) He's come back! Those robins nes' again an' we didn' know! O, bebby, bebby — your fath-er come back! Your fath-er's come back! O! O! (*Shaking a bough of cherry blossoms, which fall on them both.*) This is the bes' nize momen' since you was borned. Now your name's Joy! Suzuki: the Moon Goddess sent that bebby straight from Bridge of Heaven to make me courage to wait so long.

SUZUKI. Ah, ship's in. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Rising in great excitement*). Hoarry, Suzuki, his room. (*Suzuki pulls out a screen to form a little room.*) We mus' hoarry — (*picking flowers from the pots and decorating the room*) like we got eagle's wings an' thousan' feets. His cigarettes. (*Setting the jar in the room.*) His slipper. (*Suzuki gets them from the shrine.*) His chair, Suzuki — hustle! (*Suzuki hastens off. Madame Butterfly shakes a cushion and drops it on the floor.*) His bed. (*Suzuki enters with a steamer chair, which she places upside down.*) Now his room fixed! (*Suzuki closes the shoji. Madame Butterfly adjusts the chair and sets the lanterns about the room.*) Bring me my wides' obi, kanzashi for my hair, poppies — mus' look ver' pretty!

SUZUKI. Rest is bes' beauty. He not come yet. Sleep liddle firs'. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No, no time (*Taking up a small mirror and looking critically at herself*). He mus' see me look mos' pretty ever. You thing I change since he went away — not so beauty? (*Suzuki is silent.*) W'at? . . . I am! (*Brandishing the mirror.*) Say so!

SUZUKI. Perhaps you rest liddle, once more you get so pretty again.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. *Again?* . . .

SUZUKI. Trouble, tha's make change. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Moach change. (*Still looking in the glass.*) No, I am no more pretty — an' he come soon. (*On her knees in front of Suzuki — resting her forehead on the maid's feet.*) Ah, Suzuki, be kin' with me — make me pretty . . . don' say you can't — you moas'. An' to-morrow, the gods will. Ah, yes! You can — you can — you got to! Bring powder, comb, rouge, henna, fix it hair like on wedding day. (*Suzuki brings the toilet articles and they sit on the floor. Suzuki puts the poppies and pins in Madame Butterfly's hair, and she, in turn, dresses the baby, enveloping him in an obi, so wide that it almost covers the child.*) Now, bebby, when you cry, he'll sing you those liddle 'Merican song he sing me when I cry — song all 'Merican sing for bebby. (*Sitting with the baby in front of her, swaying it by the arms, she sings.*)

"Rog' — a — bye, bebby,
Off in Japan,
You jus' a picture,
Off of a fan."

(*Suzuki has found it very difficult to finish the toilet, but at last she accomplishes it. Madame Butterfly lifts the baby up, gives it a doll, then touches it with rouge and adds a final dash of rouge to her own face.*) Now for watch for pa-pa!
(*Putting the flag in the child's hand, she takes it up to the window and makes three holes in the shoji, one low down for the baby. As the three look through the shoji, they form the picture she has already described.*)

(*During the vigil, the night comes on. Suzuki lights the floor lamps, the stars come out, the dawn breaks, the floor lights flicker out one by one, the birds begin to sing, and the day discovers Suzuki and the baby fast asleep on the floor; but Madame Butterfly is awake, still watching, her face white and strained. She reaches out her hands and rouses Suzuki.*)

UZUKI (*Starting to her feet, surprised and looking about the room*). He no come?

IADAME BUTTERFLY. No. . . .

UZUKI (*Pityingly*). Oh! . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*With an imperious gesture*). No "Oh"! He will come. . . . Bring fresh flowers. (*She collects the lanterns as Suzuki brings in fresh flowers. Madame Butterfly tears up the roses and throws their leaves in Pinkerton's room. Then pointing to the upper part of the house.*) Now I watch from liddle look out place. (*She picks up the child whose doll drops from its hand.*) Have mos' bes' nize breakfas' ready w'en he come.

(*She leaves the room and Suzuki goes to prepare the breakfast.*)

(*The stage is empty. Very faintly a strain of "I call her the Belle of Japan" is heard. Madame Butterfly is singing that she may not weep. A pause. Some one knocks on the door. Lieutenant Pinkerton's voice calls outside the shoji.*)

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Madame Butterfly? Madame Butterfly? (*Coming into the room, he looks about.*) Butterfly?

SHARPLESS (*Following him*). They've seen the ship — these decorations were not here when I called.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Singing to hush the baby*).

"Rog' — a — bye, bebby,
Off in Japan,"

(*Lieutenant Pinkerton listens to the song coming from above.*)

"You jus' a picture,
Off of a fan."

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. She is watching the ship. (*Noticing the screened-off part of the room.*) My room . . . just as it used to look . . . my chair. (*Picking up the doll which the child has dropped.*) Poor kid! Poor little devil! . . . Sharpless, I thought when I left this house, the few tears, sobs, little polite regrets, would be over as I crossed the threshold. I started to come back for a minute, but I said to myself: "Don't do it; by this time she's ringing your gold pieces to make sure they're good." You know that class of Japanese girl and —

SHARPLESS (*Seeing Nakodo who is at the shoji*). Look here: I have something to settle with you! (*Nakodo comes in cautiously.*) Why did you seek out my friend's wife at the pier?

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Why did you tell her that story — the child and all? Answer me?

NAKODO (*To Sharpless*). Your Excellency, I but thought if trouble came between the two women, he would surely break with Cho-Cho-San, and then she would be glad to marry the rich Yamadori and I get big fee. (*Exit.*)

SHARPLESS. You'll never get it. (*To Pinkerton.*) She'll starve first.

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Sharpless, thank God, that's one thing I can do — money.

(*He takes out an envelope containing some money.*)

SHARPLESS. What did your wife say, Pinkerton?

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON. Well, it was rather rough on her, — only married four months. Sharpless, my Kate's an angel, — she offered to take the child . . . made me promise I'd speak of it to Butterfly.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Calling from above*). Suzuki?

SHARPLESS. She's coming.

(*Pinkerton instinctively draws behind the screen.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Coming down the stairs with the sleeping baby on her back, calling*). Suzuki? Come for bebby. (*Kissing the child.*) Nize liddle eye, pick out of blue sky, all shut up.

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON (*Aside to Sharpless, his eyes fixed on the mother and child*). I can't face it! I'm going. Give her the money.

SUZUKI (*Entering, and seeing Pinkerton as he passes out of the door*). Ah!

(*Sharpless gives her a warning gesture.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Seeing Suzuki's astonished face*). Wha'—?

(*She puts the baby in Suzuki's arms. Suzuki goes out quickly. Madame Butterfly sees the Consul.*) You! Oh! (*Joyously.*) You seen him?

SHARPLESS. Yes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. An' you tole him?

SHARPLESS. Well . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY. But you tole him . . . of bebby?

SHARPLESS. Yes.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Wiping her dry lips*). Yaes . . . tha's right. Tha's what I — as' you do . . . an' — an' what he *say?*

SHARPLESS. Well . . . (*Taking out the envelope, and giving her the money which she takes without looking at it.*) He said — er — he was crazy to see you and — (*aside*) What the devil can I say! (*To her.*) You know he can't leave the ship just yet. (*Pointing to the package in her hand.*) That is in remembrance of the past. He wishes you to be always happy, to have the best of luck; he hopes to see you soon — and — (*The lies die out on his lips.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Bending and kissing his hand*). All — all the gods in the heavens bless you!

(*Overcome, she staggers. Sharpless catches her, puts her into the chair — she leans against him — her face upraised, her eyes closed.*)

(*Kate, entering hurriedly.*)

KATE. Has Lieutenant Pinkerton gone? Has my husband been here?

(*Madame Butterfly hears and opens her eyes.*)

SHARPLESS. For God's sake — (*He looks at Madame Butterfly whose eyes are fixed on his with a look of despair.*) Come, we can overtake him.

KATE (*In a lower voice*). Did he speak to her of the —

SHARPLESS. No.

KATE. Then I will ask. (*For the first time seeing Madame Butterfly.*) Is this — (*Sharpless nods and goes. There is a short pause, while the two women look at each other; then Madame Butterfly, still seated, slowly bows her head.*) Why, you poor little thing . . . who in the world could blame you or . . . call you responsible . . . you pretty little plaything.

(*Takes Madame Butterfly in her arms.*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Softly*). No — playthin' . . . I am Mrs. Lef-ten-ant B. F. — No — no — now I am, only — Cho-Cho-San, but no playthin'. . . . (*She rises, then impassively.*) How long you been marry?

Photo. Byron, N. Y.

Scene from MADAME BUTTERFLY

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON (*Frank Worthing*) *to* MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Blanche Bates*).
"Oh! Cho-Cho-San."

KATE. Four months. . . .

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Counting on her fingers*). Oh . . . four.

KATE. Won't you let me do something for the child? Where is he? (*Madame Butterfly gestures toward the next room. Kate, seeing the child.*) Ah! The dear little thing! May I —

MADAME BUTTERFLY. No! Can look . . . no can touch. . . .

KATE. Let us think first of the child. For his own good . . . let me take him home to my country. . . . I will do all I would do for my own.

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Showing no emotion*). He not know then — me — his mother?

KATE. It's hard, very hard, I know; but would it not be better?

MADAME BUTTERFLY (*Taking the money-box from her sleeve, and giving the coins to Kate.*) Tha's his . . . two dollar. All tha's lef' of his moaneys. . . . I shall need no more. . . . (*She hands Kate the envelope which Sharpless has just given.*) I lig if you also say I sawry — no — no — *no* — glad — *glad!* I wish him that same happiness lig he wish for me . . . an' tell him . . . I shall be happy . . . mebby. Thang him . . . Mister B. F. Pik-ker-ton for also that kindness he have been unto me . . . an' permit me to thang *you*, augustness, for that same. . . . You — you mos' bes' lucky girl in these whole worl'. . . . Goon-night —

(*She stands stolidly with her eyes closed.*)

KATE (*Wiping her eyes*). But the child?

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Come back fifteen minute. . . . (*With closed eyes, she bows politely.*) Sayonara. (*Kate reluctantly goes.*) God he'p me, but no sun kin shine. (*Suzuki, who has listened, sinks at Madame Butterfly's feet.*) Don' cry, Suzuki, liddle maiden . . . accoun' I dizappoint, a liddle dizappoint' — don' cry. . . . (*Running her hand over Suzuki's head — as she kneels.*) Tha's short while ago you as' me res' — sleep. . . . (*Wearily.*) Well — go way an' I will res' now. . . . I *wish* res' — sleep . . . long sleep . . . an' when you see me again, I pray you look whether I be not beautiful again . . . as a bride.

SUZUKI (*Understandingly, sobbing*). No — no — no.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. So that I suffer no more — goon bye, liddle maiden. (*Suzuki does not go. Madame Butterfly claps her hands, and sobbing, Suzuki leaves the room. Madame Butterfly bolts the shoji and the door, lights fresh incense before the shrine, takes down her father's sword and reads the inscription:*) "To die with honor . . . when one can no longer live with honor." . . .

(*She draws her finger across the blade, to test the sharpness of the sword, then picks up the hand glass, puts on more rouge, rearranges the poppies in her hair, bows to the shrine, and is about to press the blade of the sword against her neck, when the door is opened and the child is pushed into the room by Suzuki, who keeps out of sight. Madame Butterfly drops the sword and takes the baby in her arms. A knocking is heard but she pays no heed. She sets the child on a mat, puts the American flag in its hand, and, picking up the sword, goes behind the screen that the child may not see what she is about to do. A short pause — the sword is heard to drop. Madame Butterfly reappears, her face deathly — a scarf about her neck to conceal the wound. Suzuki opens the door, sees the face of her mistress — backs out of the room in horror. Madame Butterfly drops to her knees as she reaches the child, and clasps it to her. A hand is thrust through the shoji and the bolt is drawn.*)

(*Kate enters quickly, urging the reluctant Pinkerton to follow her.*)

LIEUTENANT PINKERTON (*Discerning what she has done*). Oh! Cho-Cho-San!

(*He draws her to him with the baby pressed to her heart. She waves the child's hand which holds the flag —saying faintly:*)

MADAME BUTTERFLY. Too bad those robins didn' nes' again. (*She dies.*)

DU BARRY

Mr. Belasco, in 1900, found himself with the growing needs of several "stars" upon his hands. Under his painstaking care, Mrs. Leslie Carter was showing all those temperamental, colorfully picturesque characteristics which developed her into a powerful type of tragedy actress. The manager bade the dramatist feel around for suitable material for her. In 1899, he had almost decided on the figure of Queen Elizabeth, whose red hair was eminently in accord with the Carter auburn hair of fame. On June 14, 1899, he sailed for England. Miss Elizabeth Marbury asked him to come to her villa at Versailles, to discuss a play that Jean Richepin, the French dramatist, was writing around the resplendent figure of Du Barry, that "shameless hussy", as William Winter designated her, ever on the side of the "classic." In her own reminiscences, written in 1927, Mrs. Carter has given plentiful impressions of what followed; and Mr. Belasco, in his own life story (published in *Hearst's Magazine* for 1915), records the following:

Miss Marbury outlined the plot, as told to her by the dramatist, and, as she repeated it to me, the story seemed to possess great possibilities. I had produced Revolutionary plays with much success and the period was dramatic. The "Pompadour" flourished in "Louis XI" and "Richelieu"; so why not "Du Barry?" No manager in search of a woman's play could have resisted the fascinating little milliner of history. Not long after, I made arrangements with M. Richepin himself. . . . The contracts were arranged, the advance royalties paid, the costume plates begun, and before I left for London, the scene models were ordered from the scenic artists of the Comédie Française. Carried away by the enthusiasm of M. Richepin, I bought yards and yards of old "Du Barry" velvets, antique silks, and furniture of the period. When I left for home, I had made all arrangements to produce a play, not a line of which was written. . . .

When the manuscript of "Du Barry" arrived, I could scarcely wait to open the package. Alas! I was doomed to disappointment. "Du Barry", in the literary flesh, was episodic. It was poetic and beautifully written, but deadly dull. It differed entirely from the story I had heard in Versailles. My company was partially engaged — and no play! I wrote to M. Richepin, and gave him my opinion of the manuscript. I did not utterly condemn it, for I hoped that, with some suggestions, he might be able to reshape his material. But the longer he worked, the more impossible the manuscript became, until at last I lost all faith in it. It possessed a certain charm, but it was not a play.

By this time I had paid M. Richepin something like three thousand dollars in advance royalties, and the properties and scenes were almost all delivered. . . . I was so deeply involved that I saw no way out of it. As Du Barry — the character — was free to any dramatist, I decided it was time to have a hand in dramatizing the lady myself. I knew exactly what I wanted, and what was best suited to Mrs. Carter.

These are the circumstances which led to the Belasco version of "Du Barry", produced in Washington, D. C., on December 12, 1901, and brought to the Criterion Theatre, New York, Christmas night of the same year. On January 25, 1902, Richepin began suit, on the plea that his contract had been broken, but, in the end, the case was discontinued. The Richepin version was presented at the London Savoy Theatre, with Mrs. Cora Urquhart Potter in the title rôle, and it met with failure. This discouraged Mr. Belasco from taking his production across seas.

In the preparation of this play, Mr. Belasco was in his element. The collector's instinct in him was given full rein; and he soon found added to his collection of curios, an invaluable assortment of furniture, glass, and silks. Some of this made its way into his production, but a larger part by far was discarded, as the play was rewritten and revised.

A long run of "Du Barry" justified Mr. Belasco in the belief that his choice of a bad woman for the stage, hailed by the conventional critic as an unnecessary choice, was not without its merits. And a large fortune, more than $98,000, had been

expended on it, and there was no hope of clearing a profit, especially since the play was taken on tour through the country — one hundred and forty-seven players — and since the Theatrical Trust, through its booking agency, combated every step of the way.

Mr. Belasco was gaining authority in his managerial position, however. The public was recognizing his quality, far and above that of any other manager of his time. Yet he was being locked out of strategic positions by not having any theatre of his own in New York, and being opposed by opposition interests on the road. So he made arrangements to take over Oscar Hammerstein's Republic Theatre, on Forty-second Street, and to convert it to his own needs, calling it the Belasco Theatre. "Du Barry" was revived as its opening bill, September 29, 1902; and for the occasion a souvenir volume was issued, "The Story of Du Barry", by James L. Ford. It was on December 31, 1902, that the manager-author was presented with a Du Barry Cup by his company.

At Weber and Fields, "Du Barry", as noted in the *New York Herald* of March 14, 1902, was burlesqued; it was called "Du Hurry", Sam Bernard playing the part of Louis Quince, King of France, and Fay Templeton in the title rôle.

This, then, is an outline of the genesis and launching of a play in the face of managerial difficulties. The double estimate of Mr. Belasco has always to be borne in mind. He was a dramatist for a theatre he knew excellently well; and his taste as a producer set for himself the task he had to do. He knew that "Du Barry" should be a lavish play, so lavish he made it.

DU BARRY

All stage, screen and amateur rights for the production of "Du Barry" are controlled by Mrs. Leslie Carter. No performances or public readings whatsoever may be given without written consent.

AN EXTRACT

by

Guy de Maupassant

(Published in the original house program of the play.)

There are some women in history who shine like stars, whose memories cannot flicker out, and in every case it will be found that these women live by the power of love alone; either by the love they have given or their capacity for loving when love has been denied them. This quality is always felt; it stirs other hearts in the reading and telling of it until it carries ages down — ever finding a fresh home in the hearts of painters, sculptors, writers.

La du Barry was one of these women. Two powerful ingredients go to make up the composition of her character — passion and simple truth. An obscure little milliner whose parentage was clouded, whose mother was a creature who "walked the gardens of the Tuileries by night", — whose ways in the beginning were humble and lowly, La du Barry, — first known as Jeanette Vaubernier, — remained to the end unchanged and unaffected by the pomp which eventually surrounded her.

This girl loved nothing in the world so well as love, yet, by her utter frankness and simplicity, she kept her strange charm over the powerful and weary Louis XV, for whom she made no pretense of real affection.

In spite of her frivolity, the enchantment which surrounded La du Barry never deserted her for a moment — not even in the tumbril bearing her away for all time. Her vagabond nature, mad for love, was always within the reach of it, yet was never satisfied; and her heart, while often full of pain, still dreamed of a romance and lent itself to moments of rapture which do

not come to everyone. The mysteries of the heart, the tears, the sighs, laughter — how well she knew them all: and sorrow, too, although she bent her head under it without losing her youth, her grace, her spirits.

Poor Du Barry! Poor misplaced milliner! So high — so low . . . great lady, grisette and vagabond — insolent, humble — "a creature of fate," as she herself said, "always being carried on and on — and always the wrong way." Redoubtable, faulty and charming, her personality comes down to us so utterly feminine that we see in her Eve with all her faults, standing in naked frankness, quite as unclothed morally. She is the gamut of the woman who has always been, who will always be.

DU BARRY

"Not the great historical events, but the personal incidents that call up single, sharp pictures of some human being in its pang or struggle, reach us more nearly." *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

ORIGINAL CAST

Louis XV., *King of France*	C. A. Stevenson
Comte Jean du Barry, *eventually brother-in-law of "La du Barry"*	Campbell Gollan
Comte Guillaume, *his brother*	Beresford Webb
Duc de Brissac, *Captain of the King's Guard*	Henry Weaver, Sr.
Cossé-Brissac, *his son (of the King's Guard), known as "Cossé"*	Hamilton Revelle
The Papal Nuncio	H. R. Roberts
Duc de Richelieu, *Marshal of France*	Frederick Perry
Maupeou, *Lord Chancellor* } *under Louis XV.* {	C. P. Flockton
Terray, *Minister of Finance* } *under Louis XV.* {	H. G. Carlton
Duc d'Aiguillon	Leonard Cooper
Denys, *porter at the milliner shop*	Claude Gillingwater
Lebel, *confidential valet to His Majesty*	Herbert Millward
Labille, *proprietor of the milliner shop*	Gilmore Scott
Vaubernier, *father of Jeanette*	Walter Belasco
Scalo, *one of "La du Barry's" Nubian servants*	J. D. Jones
Zamore, *a plaything*	Master Sams
Flute Player	A. Joly
Valroy } *of the King's Guard* {	Douglas J. Wood
D'Altaire } *of the King's Guard* {	Louis Myll
De Courcel } *of the King's Guard* {	Harold Howard
La Garde } *two tavern roysterers* {	W. T. Bune
Fontenelle } *two tavern roysterers* {	Warren Bevin
Renard, *one of the "Hundred Swiss"*	Arthur Pearson
Citizen Grieve, *of the Committee of Public Safety*	Gaston Mervale
Marac, *one of the Sans-Culottes*	Walter Belasco
Denisot, *Judge of the Revolutionary Court*	H. G. Carlton
Tavernier, *clerk of the Court*	John Ingram
Gomard	Charles Hayne
Hortense, *Manageress for Labille, the milliner*	Eleanor Carey

LOLOTTE	*Girls at the Milliner's Shop*	Nina Lyn
MANON		Florence St. Leonard
JULIE		Corah Adams
LEONIE		Blanche Sherwood
NICHETTE		Ann Archer
JULIETTE		May Lyn
MARQUISE DE QUESNOY, *known as "La Gourdan", keeper of a gambling house*		Blanche Rice
SOPHIE ARNAULD, *queen of the Opera*		Helen Robertson
THE GIPSY HAG, *a fortune-teller*		C. P. Flockton
MLLE. LE GRAND	*Dancers from the Grande Opera*	Ruth Dennis
MLLE. GUIMARD		Eleanor Stuart
MME. LA DAUPHINE, *Marie Antoinette at sixteen*		Helen Hale
MARQUISE DE CRENAY	*Ladies of Louis' Court*	Dora Goldthwaite
DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON		Miss Lyn
PRINCESSE ALIXE		Miss Leonard
DUCHESSE DE CHOISY		Louise Morewin
MARQUISE DE LANGERS		May Montford
COMTESSE DE MARSEN		Grace Van Benthuysen
SOPHIE, *a maid*		Irma Perry
ROSALIE, *of the Conciergerie*		Helen Robertson
CERISETTE		Julie Lindsey
JEANETTE VAUBERNIER, *afterwards "La du Barry"*		Mrs. Leslie Carter

Guests of the Fête, dancers from the Opera, King's guardsmen, monks, clowns, pages, milliners, sentries, lackeys, footmen, King's Secret Police, Sans-Culottes, a mock king, a mock herald, a drunken patriot, a cocoa vendor, Federals, National Guards, Tricoteuses.

Mr. Belasco wishes to state that, as it is impossible to dramatize the traditional parting of Madame du Barry and the King of France, he has departed from historical accuracy in this instance. He also begs to acknowledge his indebtedness to Mr. Arsène Houssaye for his sequence of scenes ("*Nouvelle à la main, sur le Comtesse du Barry*").

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

The Milliner's shop in the rue St. Honoré. Paris.
Jeanette trims hats.

ACT II

(One month later.) Jeanette's Apartments, adjoining the Gambling Rooms of the Marquise de Quesnoy ("La Gourdan").
"The game called destiny."

ACT III

(A year later.) Du Barry holds a Petit-Levée in the Palace of Versailles — at noon.

"The doll of the world."

ACT IV

SCENE 1. In the Royal Gardens. Before the dawn of the following morning.

"Folly, Queen of France."

SCENE 2. Within the tent.

"The heart of the woman."

ACT V

(A lapse of years.) During the Revolution.

SCENE 1. The Retreat in the woods of Louveciennes.

"Fate creeps in at the door."

SCENE 2. (Five days later.) In Paris again.

"A reed shaken in the wind."

SCENE 3. In front of the Milliner's Shop on the same day.

"Once more we pass this way again,
Once more! 'Tis where at first we met."

TIME. Period of Louis XV., and after the reign of his successor.
PLACE. Paris, Versailles and Louveciennes.

The entire production under the personal supervision of Mr. Belasco.

Scenery by Ernest Gros.

Stage decorations and accessories after designs by Wilfred Buckland.

ACT I

SCENE: *A Milliner's shop in Rue Saint Honoré.*

Mademoiselle Jeanette trims hats.

The famous shop, owned by Madame Labille, but conducted in the name of her husband, stood on the rue Saint Honoré, at the corner of the rue Neuf-des-Petits-Champs (since made world famous by Thackeray's "Ballad of Bouillabaise").

The shop windows opening on the street (but at the back of the scene) are decorated with plumes, hats and flowers. In the main room, a counter stands at one side, over which are sold ribbons, silks, buckles, high-heeled slippers, sword-knots and corsets. A counter on the opposite side, with tall seats behind it, ends in a business-like desk. Cupboards for hats and flowers are within easy reach of this counter.

Glass doors lead to the work-room in which, from time to time, we see young girls sewing, snipping and shaping flowers.

An armchair, standing beside an inviting sofa, is set at the back for the customers.

Other doors lead to the porter's cupboard and the mirror room.

And here, in Labille's shop, trimming bouquets and snipping out leaves, is one Jeanette Vaubernier — to be known later as La du Barry, the mistress of a king; but at present not dreaming of the destiny awaiting her.

As the curtain rises, a hurdy-gurdy is played outside in the street to put us in the mood of the days when Louis XV was ruler of France.

Madame Hortense is seated looking over a sheet of figures. She is about 45 years old, stout, palpably laced and very much made up. Juliette and Nichette are decorating the shop windows; Juliette is handing hats to Nichette, who places them on view to tempt the passer-by. Leonie, behind the counter, is making a poppy. Two

other girls, seated at a little table near the work-room steps, are sliding ribbons through buckles. Denys, the porter who remains Jeanette's friend to the very end of her life, a tall, impassive man of about 35, is in the street polishing the shop windows.

The girls in the work-room are chattering, and one of them is singing as the curtain goes up.

HORTENSE. Juliette, Juliette, quiet!

JULIETTE. Yes, Madame.

HORTENSE. Make haste in the window, girls.

MANON. My roses are finished, Madame Hortense.

HORTENSE. Too large, Manon. My God! They are almost cabbages. Sit there and snip them down.

(*Manon, pouting, obeys.*)

SOPHIE ARNAULD (*Heard off*). Damn these hats!

HORTENSE. Ah, that Arnauld woman is swearing again. What a creature!

(*Sophie Arnauld enters angrily. She is dark, voluptuous and very dramatic in manner. Labille, a large fat man, follows her, carrying an enormous hat laden with plumes. Lolotte, Julie and three other girls, all carrying hats, follow Sophie.*)

SOPHIE ARNAULD. Where's my own hat, Labille? You never try to please me.

LABILLE. Ah! Here's something more to your fancy — more jaunty. Hortense, let her see herself in this.

(*He takes a showy hat from a case.*)

HORTENSE. The curve and the feather will become the profile.

LABILLE. Yes, yes, the curve and the feather. (*Sets the hat on Sophie's head.*) There . . . Perfection!

THE MILLINERS. Ah! Ah! Perfection!

SOPHIE ARNAULD. They must come to me for style; they must come to Sophie Arnauld — "Queen of the Opera."

(*Mademoiselle Le Grand and Mademoiselle Guimard enter. They are famous dancers.*)

LE GRAND. Hats! Hats!

LABILLE. Yes, yes, ladies.

LE GRAND. Something dazzling and expensive.

MLLE. GUIMARD. Yes, very expensive.

LABILLE. Yes, yes, yes.

HORTENSE. Labille, look! Madame la Marquise is coming in. Juliette, Juliette, make haste.

SOPHIE ARNAULD. Send this hat, Hortense. 'Tis lovely.

HORTENSE. Yes, Mademoiselle. (*To Juliette.*) Send this to Mademoiselle Sophie Arnauld. (*To Sophie.*) Now, if Mademoiselle will come with me, I will show her some more hats.

SOPHIE ARNAULD. No — head-dresses. I want to see head-dresses.

LABILLE. Manon, that head-dress for — (*While Sophie Arnauld goes off to look at the head-dresses, Marquise de Quesnoy, a flashily dressed, painted old woman, has left her chair in the street and is escorted to the door by two powdered footmen.*) Ah, Madame la Marquise. Julie, a chair for Madame la Marquise.

MARQUISE. Let me see what you have for me, for the Court ball to-night.

MANON (*Aside to the girls*). Court ball! Why, that's the old Marquise de Quesnoy, who keeps the big gambling house in rue de Bourbon. They call her "La Gourdan."

LABILLE (*Exhibiting a head-dress*). Stately, is it not? Superb!

MARQUISE. No, it lacks style. You have a girl here called Jeanette, who designed a gown for me . . . I do not see her. Where is she?

LABILLE. In the mirror room, trying on hats.

MARQUISE. I'll buy of her. She has style, Labille.

(*She goes to the mirror room.*)

LE GRAND. Come, Nini, we have a rendezvous.

(*They hasten away.*)

LABILLE (*To Hortense, who has re-entered*). That old devil of a Marquise!

HORTENSE. What does that horrible old woman want here, Labille?

LABILLE. I think she has her watery eyes on our Jeanette.

(*To a milliner.*) Take this box and the pompons to the modiste across the street. (*The milliner goes out.*) And now, young women — to work.

(*Labille takes his hat and saunters off.*)

SOPHIE ARNAULD (*Heard off*). Is there no one to wait upon me? The devil! Hortense, where are you?

HORTENSE. I'm coming. . . . What a temper she has — that old —

(*Hastens off.*)

DENYS (*Sweeping up bits of silk*). What are baskets made for? My floor is littered with all the ——

(*In the distance martial music is heard, coming nearer and nearer.*)

NICHETTE. That's the King's Guard.

JULIETTE. Girls — look!

(*A bugle calls a halt — followed by a call of dismissal.*)

MANON. They're coming this way.

JULIE. They'll pass by.

MANON. They're stopping at the wine-shop.

(*Duc de Brissac, the Captain of the regiment, passes the window, followed by several guardsmen who throw kisses to the girls behind the Captain's back.*)

THE MILLINER (*Re-entering*). Oh, girls, a guardsman is carrying my box.

MANON. He's coming in — others are following him.

(*The girls fly behind the counters and bow demurely to seven guardsmen who enter laughing.*)

VALROY (*The milliner's box under his arm*). There's no millinery shop like Labille's — not in the city of Paris . . . And now, I'll take that kiss I missed yesterday.

DE COURCEL. Valroy — the baby of the regiment — and look at him!

MANON. Will you buy some poppies, Monsieur?

VALROY. With pleasure.

JULIE. I prefer scented veiling.

ALL THE GIRLS. Scented veiling! Oh yes! So becoming!

VALROY. We'll buy them all scented veilings.

(*Cossé-Brissac, known as Cossé, son of the Duc de Brissac, enters and, seeing the rest of the guardsmen, starts to withdraw.*)

D'ALTAIRE. Cossé — it's Cossé.

VALROY. Our Captain's son in a milliner's shop! Ho! Ho! What brings you here?

COSSÉ. My secret . . .

VALROY. Is she among the fair ladies present?

COSSÉ. My secret . . .

LABILLE (*Re-entering*). Messieurs.

(*The guardsmen turn, abashed. To make matters worse, the Captain of the regiment comes in.*)

CAPTAIN. My men in a millinery shop!

VALROY. The devil — our Captain!

CAPTAIN. I might have known it. Fall in! Right face! (*They go off. Sees his son, Cossé.*) And who is this? You, my son, in a millinery shop? (*They embrace.*) Make haste, my boy; the King will soon be leaving the palace.

COSSÉ. Plenty of time, father, before His Majesty can reach the Square.

CAPTAIN. Don't be late, my boy.

(*He goes out.*)

HORTENSE. Julie, draw the curtains.

(*Labille goes into the work-room without noticing Cossé, who now rises awkwardly.*)

MANON (*Aside*). He's waiting for Jeanette.

HORTENSE. I have no patience with that young man — in and out every day and afraid to speak to her.

MANON. And such an excuse as he offers —

HORTENSE. What is it?

MANON. He comes to buy a sword-knot.

SOPHIE. May I serve you, Monsieur?

COSSÉ. I — I — I wish to buy a sword-knot.

HORTENSE. Hm . . . Sophie, did you notice that Mademoiselle Jeanette —

COSSÉ. Where is — er — Your pardon . . . I misunderstood.

HORTENSE. I only meant to say: did you notice, Sophie, that Jeanette adores flowers, especially violets?

COSSÉ. Does she? 'Tis a charming trait in a woman — love of flowers. It should be encouraged; in point of fact, I myself prefer violets.

HORTENSE. Yes, Monsieur?

COSSÉ (*Who has paid for the sword-knot*). Thank you. Good-day.

(*He hastens off.*)

HORTENSE. He will come back with violets.

(*Jean du Barry, a tall, shabbily dressed, rakish looking man of about 36, has entered and is leaning against the door, studying the faces of the girls.*)

SOPHIE ARNAULD. Cleopatra herself couldn't have had a more seductive head-dress. Manon, my hat.

JEAN (*To himself*). Pretty faces — but bah! They could not hold a restless player to a second game. (*Clapping Sophie Arnauld on the shoulder.*) Sophie, my dear —

SOPHIE ARNAULD. Jean du Barry! You startled me.

JEAN. I've been sent here to look for a diverting girl with an empty purse.

SOPHIE ARNAULD. What for?

JEAN. A bait for La Gourdan's gambling rooms.

SOPHIE ARNAULD. La Gourdan! That name gives me a chill. Ugh!

JEAN. If we cannot find a fresh face, La Gourdan will be sold out. Jarni! We need a fascinating petticoat to urge them up to the tables. I'm looking for a girl named "Jeanette" — point her out to me.

SOPHIE ARNAULD. For La Gourdan's hell? No, thank you. (*To Manon who has re-entered.*) Send this to-night.

(*She takes her departure, passing Cossé at the door.*)

JEAN. Monsieur de Cossé, eh?

COSSÉ. Would Madame permit me to leave these for — er — Mademoiselle —

HORTENSE. O yes, Monsieur, certainly.

COSSÉ. — and accept a bunch for herself? (*Hortense takes a bunch of violets.*) Thank you.

(*Cossé writes his name on a card.*)

JEAN (*To himself*). Cossé is caught, eh? . . . Who is this drawing card that lures aristocrats?

COSSÉ (*Giving his card to Hortense*). For Mademoiselle . . . Thank you.

HORTENSE. Take the card, Sophie. Such a nice, polite young man, isn't he?

(*Jean, seeing that Cossé has crossed the threshold, snatches the card from Sophie.*)

SOPHIE. Monsieur!

JEAN (*Reading the name*). Mademoiselle Jeanette.

COSSÉ (*Taking the card from Jean's hand, hands it to Manon*). Permit me, Monsieur du Barry. This is not one of the cards you shift so easily under your fingers.

JEAN. Do you call me a cheat, Monsieur?

COSSÉ. A cheat and worse — a blackguard!

(*He leaves the shop.*)

JEAN. I'll give that fellow a heart thrust one of these days.

HORTENSE. Come, come, girls, make haste with the hats — or Labille will not let you out to-day when the King passes.

MARQUISE (*Re-appearing*). Very well, Mademoiselle Jeanette, I'll take all four hats . . . Ah, Jean, I'm glad you've come. The card we want is in there . . . Jeanette. We must have her. (*Calling as she leaves.*) You may send the head-dress, too. Good-day, my dear.

JEANETTE (*Inside the mirror room*). Thank you, Madame la Marquise.

MARQUISE. Jean, you must have that girl at my house to-night — to-night, dear Jean, to-night.

(*She is carried down the street in her chair.*)

JEANETTE (*Enters, wearing a calèche and carrying three large, showy hats*). Look, look! I've sold them all. Denys, fetch me in a large hat-box. You know that Madame La Marquise de Quesnoy is very particular, so be careful in packing the hats. I'm sorry she bought the one I wear, 'tis so becoming to me, is it not? I wore it out this morning when I met François, the hairdresser, and he said: "You're so sweet in that calèche, I'll buy you the prettiest petticoat

in Pagellé's if you'll come for a walk with me." So I went — naturally . . . Wouldn't you? . . . Wouldn't you . . . (*Hortense enters and stands looking at Jeanette disapprovingly.*)

MANON. Pst! Jeanette, Madame Hortense!

GIRLS. Pst! Pst! Take off the calèche.

HORTENSE. Oh, I heard.

JEANETTE. Now don't say a word.

HORTENSE. You are wearing our hats.

JEANETTE. I've just sold five — and I put the prices up, too.

HORTENSE (*Melting*). Where's the money?

JEANETTE. The what? . . . The money? . . . Oh, yes, here it is. And there goes Denys with the hats. (*Denys has packed the hats and now carries them off.*) Ah, that old Marquise! What an insult to a pretty hat to clap it over that hard old face.

HORTENSE. Come, Jeanette: this head-dress must go to the Court ball to-night.

JEAN (*At the door*). La Gourdan was right. We must have her.

(*He goes up the street.*)

JEANETTE (*Seated*). More work?

HORTENSE. She never wants to work.

JEANETTE. No, I do not. I hate to work.

SOPHIE (*Trying to pose a long thin blackbird on a hat*). Jeanette, what is the matter with this?

JEANETTE. Here: give it to me. Make him look happy. Make him look gay. There! (*She has bent the bird's tail and raised its head.*) He'll sing in a minute. I wish, Hortense, you would let me carry out hats all the time. I want to be in the street and see things . . . There's life out there in the street. Won't you let me carry home the hats? Then I can earn my living and never know that I am working for it.

JULIETTE. Look, girls, Jeanette has a new buckle on her wrist-band.

SOPHIE. She always has something pretty.

HORTENSE. Because she never buys anything sensible. She

hasn't a shift to her back. She is wearing my underclothing this very minute.

JEANETTE. Well, I haven't much money, so I spend it where it'll show. Is it my fault that I'm going about with a big hole in my stocking — look at it!

HORTENSE (*Shocked*). Oh! You're a scatter-brained little goose. I've no patience with you. (*She drops Cossé's bunch of violets in Jeanette's lap.*) Don't let Labille see this.

JEANETTE. Violets!

HORTENSE. These love affairs.

MANON (*To the other girls*). I wonder what she'll say when she knows who sent 'em.

JEANETTE. You little purple eyes. (*Kissing the violets.*) I love you because you came out of the shadow of a wood. I would rather have you than bread to eat or a bed to sleep in. Girls, pretty things are necessities to me. I cannot live without them. I get that from Mamma.

HORTENSE. Nice ideas, I must say.

JEANETTE. It must be heaven to live for the mere luxury of living, like a great, fine flower in the hot sun; to deny yourself nothing — nothing at all; to laugh in the face of the whole world; to squander money — make it fly — buy everything you see — throw it away, eh? Ah, heavenly!

HORTENSE. Oh!

JEANETTE. Who sent the violets?

MANON. Let her guess.

HORTENSE. A very bashful young man.

JEANETTE. Then I know . . . Then I know . . .

(*She is lost in thought.*)

MANON. Look at her . . . she's quiet for a whole minute. I believe she's in love.

HORTENSE. Go on with your work, young women.

(*The girls fall to.*)

JEANETTE (*Shrugging her shoulders*). So he has found his courage at last. I thought that smile I gave him yesterday would pin him down. (*Sighs.*) Taratata!

HORTENSE. Jeanette, do you ever intend to work?

JEANETTE. Hortense, it is against my nature to work. It sets my teeth on edge . . . like rubbing velvet the wrong way. Ugh! Where are the buckles for this head-dress?

NICHETTE. You should have been here to-day, Jeanette.

MANON. Seven guardsmen in the shop! The young man who sent the violets —

JEANETTE. Yes?

MANON. He was so indignant because some one read your name on his card that —

NICHETTE. He looked to me like a man who would defend you at the risk of his life.

MANON. Yes, fight for you.

JEANETTE. Fight for me . . .

HORTENSE. Die for you.

JEANETTE. A man . . . die for me . . .

HORTENSE. Monsieur de Cossé-Brissac would do it. He's mad over you.

JEANETTE. You think so, really?

HORTENSE. Do I think so? He was ready for a duel. And when a man is prepared to die for you —

JEANETTE. Die for me . . . Think of it!

SOPHIE. Jeanette, are you in love?

GIRLS. Tell us — do tell us.

HORTENSE. Yes, tell us: are you in love?

JEANETTE. I don't know; but if it makes you perfectly happy, and you are not obliged to work, well — I am willing to be madly in love this minute, — aren't you?

(*A bell rings.*)

SOPHIE. Luncheon. Come on, Jeanette.

JEANETTE. Yes, in a little while.

(*The girls hasten off.*)

VAUBERNIER (*A street vendor — outside*). I have blackstones to blacken slippers and shoes.

JEANETTE. That's papa.

VAUBERNIER (*Appearing*). Good-day, my pearl among daughters. I haven't blacked a slipper to-day. Have you a few sous?

(*He is a weak-faced, disreputable looking ex-monk. His clothing is half clerical. He shows the effects of hard drinking.*)

JEANETTE. What for?

VAUBERNIER. Absinthe.

JEANETTE. There's one thing I like about you, papa, you're frank.

VAUBERNIER. I learned that in the monastery, before they expelled me for my unfortunate affection for your dear mother. (*He abstracts a buckle from the counter.*)

JEANETTE (*Seizing his hand*). Let go! (*She takes the buckle.*) Don't you come here again . . . taking things from our shop! Now be off.

VAUBERNIER. I'll go for a franc — not a sou less.

JEANETTE. Here's a franc . . . but it is my last. I'll divide with you.

VAUBERNIER. Bless you, my child, bless you!

(*He grabs the franc and runs out.*)

HORTENSE. If I were in your place, I would not give him one centime — father or no father.

(*Jeanette shrugs her shoulders and goes off for a bite of luncheon.*)

(*Cries of "Help!" "Thief!" are heard outside, and the clatter of footsteps running round the corner. Jeanette's father has found a fresh victim.*)

HORTENSE (*Hurrying towards the door*). Oh!

(*The girls rush on as the Papal Nuncio, a man of distinguished appearance, whose hair is tinged with gray, enters, leaning on the arm of his attendant.*)

NUNCIO. Let us rest a moment, please. A footpad attacked and robbed me.

HORTENSE. Sit down, Your Eminence. Pray let me fetch you a glass of water . . . Stop staring, girls. 'Tis His Eminence, the Papal Nuncio.

(*The girls respectfully retire.*)

NUNCIO. Thank you, Madame . . . I am sorry the rascal escaped. I have seen that man before. (*Struck.*) Ah! The outcast monk who gave such sorrow to our good Capuchins . . . his name — er — Vaubernier.

JEANETTE (*Re-entering*). Hortense, won't you please ask Labille to let me come in late to-morrow? I want to go to the ball to-night at Romponneaux.

HORTENSE. Sh!

NUNCIO. Mademoiselle.

(*Jeanette goes towards the porter's room, smiling back at the Nuncio, shrugging her shoulders.*)

HORTENSE. God defend us . . . Coquetting with His Eminence!

NUNCIO. An enchanting little hussy: does she strew everyone's path with eloquent smiles?

HORTENSE. Ah, Monseigneur, 'tis well that she can smile at all with such a father as Vaubernier.

NUNCIO. That outcast monk her father?

HORTENSE. And her mother one of those unfortunate women who walk the streets of Paris by night.

NUNCIO. A sad heritage, Madame, a sad heritage.

JEANETTE (*Re-enters, eating cake and singing to a tune played in the street. The Nuncio pauses at the door to look at her as though fascinated, then passes the window and disappears*). Denys, this head-dress must be delivered at once. Wait — I'll put it in a box while you get your hat.

COSSÉ (*Suddenly re-appearing*). Mademoiselle Vaubernier. . . .

JEANETTE. Oh Monsieur! You startled me.

COSSÉ. I have come for a sword-knot.

JEANETTE. A sword-knot? You bought the last one, Monsieur.

COSSÉ. Forgive me for sending the violets. I did it on the impulse of the moment.

JEANETTE. I heard . . . You're the young man who fought and died for me.

COSSÉ (*Quickly*). Died?

JEANETTE. I should say, would have died.

COSSÉ. Would have died for you, Mademoiselle? Would have? A thousand times, were there need of it . . . Ah, Mademoiselle, I long to be your cavalier. My sword, my life, everything I have is at your service.

JEANETTE. Yes?

DENYS (*Entering*). Are you ready with the head-dress?

JEANETTE. Yes, for Madame la Duchesse d'Aiguillon. . . . (*She is looking at Cossé and carelessly drops the box.*) Oh! (*Denys, scenting a romance, picks up the box and goes.*)

COSSÉ. I have often wanted to speak to you, but —

JEANETTE. Why didn't you?

COSSÉ. I was afraid . . . I have seen other guardsmen in here . . . I am serious when I say that I —

LABILLE (*Entering, wiping his mouth and smacking his lips*). Ah! My favorite cheese.

(*He sees Cossé — glares at him.*)

JEANETTE (*Quickly seizing a form with a large corset on it*). This should please your sweetheart, Monsieur.

COSSÉ. But I have no sweetheart.

JEANETTE. Pst! . . . The curve and the long line is elegance itself; I'm sure 'twould please her. (*Aloud.*) 'Tis the most expensive we have, but —

COSSÉ. I'll buy it. How much is it, Mademoiselle?

JEANETTE. Twenty louis, Monsieur. (*Labille, delighted, goes off to the work-room.*) I'm sorry I chose this — but 'twas the first thing I saw. The next time Labille comes in, he shall find me measuring ribbons. They are cheaper.

COSSÉ. Mademoiselle, although a stranger to you, I have known you a long time.

LABILLE (*Heard off in the work-room*). Come, come, there won't be another hat going out to-day.

(*Jeanette quickly brings down a box of different colored ribbons.*)

COSSÉ. I hope I am not interrupting.

JEANETTE. No indeed! What makes you think you know me?

COSSÉ. From the day I bought that first sword-knot, I knew you. I saw that you were frank — you told me it would fade, — the sword-knot, I mean, — it has faded. (*Half laughing.*) I saw that you were impulsive . . . full of good impulses . . . I knew that you were shy.

JEANETTE. Did you say — shy?

COSSÉ. Yes, shy and, pardon me, rather restless.

JEANETTE. Ah! You saw that, did you? 'Tis true; for there isn't a day that I don't envy the cat, coming when he pleases, climbing the shelves, going to sleep on a bit of ribbon. Oh, it is terrible to stay where you are unhappy, kept in and made to slave . . . (*Leaning over the counter.*) Going to the ball at Ramponneaux to-night?

COSSÉ. No.

JEANETTE. I am . . . Won't you drop in?

COSSÉ. Don't go.

JEANETTE. Why not?

COSSÉ (*Sits at counter*). You — in such a rabble! Students and roués, drinking, shouting and swearing. Ah, I'm sure, Mademoiselle, you know nothing of the place. (*She makes a little grimace. She knows the place very well indeed.*) Please do not go. I ask it because I —

JEANETTE (*Aimlessly measuring ribbon until it forms a heap on the floor*). Well . . . why are you?

COSSÉ. Because I — I cannot help it.

(*Takes her hand as the Marquise de Crenay, a tall, aristocratic woman, enters, followed by two lackeys who stand in the doorway.*)

MARQUISE DE CRENAY. Mademoiselle, I —

JEANETTE. Madame la Marquise de Crenay, we are honored. (*Turning to Cossé.*) It must be strange to feel —

MARQUISE. I will look at pompons.

JEANETTE. — to feel —

COSSÉ. Mademoiselle, it is strange.

(*The Marquise coughs haughtily.*)

JEANETTE. At your service, Madame la Marquise: I am extremely busy at this moment, but —

MARQUISE. Let me see that pompon, my good girl.

COSSÉ. I *am* disturbing you.

JEANETTE. In a moment, Madame la Marquise. (*To Cossé.*) No, no, you are not.

MARQUISE. I wish to see this pompon. I wish to see it at once.

JEANETTE (*Vaguely*). Wish to see what, Madame?

MARQUISE. This pompon!

JEANETTE. Oh! (*Whisks a pompon out of the case, handing*

it to the Marquise with a forced smile.) There, Madame la Marquise.

(*She leans back to Cossé.*)

COSSÉ. I saw you at Saint Jean's.

JEANETTE. Why didn't you speak to me? I saw you at St. Jean's too. I kept looking at you. I gave you every chance to —

MARQUISE. The cost of this pompon?

COSSÉ (*Pleased by her frankness*). You are charming . . . you are so frank, so —

(*He takes both her hands.*)

MARQUISE. The cost of this pompon at once or I shall complain to Labille.

JEANETTE. Ah! (*To Cossé.*) Stay. (*She reads the price.*) Four louis, Madame la Marquise.

MARQUISE. I will try on the head-dress in that case.

JEANETTE. There, Madame la Marquise. Lovely, is it not? (*She hurries back to Cossé.*)

COSSÉ. O, Mademoiselle . . . Mademoiselle . . .

JEANETTE. No, no . . . careful . . . She is looking.

MARQUISE. Mademoiselle, would you consider —

JEANETTE. Yes, Madame la Marquise, I would consider —

MARQUISE. — a ribbon more becoming?

JEANETTE (*To Cossé*). Go on with it . . . what you were saying.

COSSÉ. Ah, don't be angry; but I love you . . . I love you. (*He has her in his arms and is about to kiss her.*)

MARQUISE. Where is Labille?

JEANETTE. Isn't she unreasonable?

MARQUISE. This is preposterous!

JEANETTE. Allow me to show you, Madame la Marquise, how the head-dress is worn. There . . . 'Tis charming. Look! Charming! (*Holding up the hand-glass.*) It becomes you.

MARQUISE. 'Tis charming, my good girl. (*Taking another look in hand-mirror.*) I must have it! I shall wear it home. Send my own hat.

JEANETTE (*Mechanically*). Yes, yes, Madame la Marquise.

Thank you, Madame la Marquise. Good-day, Madame la Marquise, good-day. An honor.

MARQUISE (*Beaming*). Thank you, my child. Good-day. (*The Marquise is bowed out and followed off by her two lackeys.*)

COSSÉ. I love you. Oh, try to love me — try to love me: will you, Mademoiselle? Will you?

JEANETTE. Come in and buy a sword-knot to-morrow; and then I'll tell you whether I . . . I'll try hard.

COSSÉ (*Putting his arms round her*). Tell me now . . . Ah, be my sweetheart.

JEANETTE. To-morrow . . .

COSSÉ. But not here. Come with me into the country to-morrow . . . You are fond of the country . . . we'll go to the fields of St. Gervais, you and I together; we'll pick the violets you love. Come, come, come, Mademoiselle, come, will you?

JEANETTE (*In Cossé's arms*). Yes, yes.

COSSÉ. Open your eyes and look at me.

JEANETTE. I can see you.

COSSÉ. But your eyes are closed.

JEANETTE. A way I have when I'm thinking . . .

COSSÉ. And you'll tell me to-morrow?

JEANETTE. Yes.

COSSÉ (*About to kiss her*). Ah!

JEANETTE. Wait, wait . . . to-morrow.

COSSÉ. Good-bye until —

JEANETTE. To-morrow.

COSSÉ. You promise?

JEANETTE. Oh yes, I promise.

COSSÉ. Good-bye . . . You won't forget?

JEANETTE. No, no, when I promise, I promise, Monsieur. Good-bye.

COSSÉ. Good-bye, my —

(*Tries to embrace her.*)

JEANETTE. To-morrow.

COSSÉ. Until then —

JEANETTE. Until then —

TOGETHER (*As though the parting were eternal*). Good-bye. (*She follows Cossé to the street door and, after a few more "good-bye's", Cossé manages to tear himself away. He is no sooner out of sight than trumpets and bugles are heard in the distance.*)

JEANETTE. The King!

(*She picks up a calèche, borrowed as usual from the stock, and begins to tuck in her curls.*)

(*The girls come running in, putting on their hats.*)

MANON. The King is going to review his troops in the Square. We shall have a chance to see the soldiers. Come on, Jeanette.

JEANETTE. Yes, yes . . . one minute.

LABILLE (*Wearing his hat and carrying a big banner*). Denys, lock up the shop.

VOICES (*Outside*). Long live the King! Long live the King!

JEANETTE (*Calling after the girls*). Wait, wait, wait, girls.

LABILLE. Long live the King!

(*He goes into the street which is now black with people.*)

JEANETTE. Where's my other mitt? Oh, where is it — where did I put it? (*She flies to the door.*) What a crowd! I shall never find a spot to stand in to see the King . . . Where is my — (*She finds the mitt.*) Oh, here it is.

JEAN (*Appearing suddenly*). Mademoiselle, do you wish to see the King pass?

JEANETTE (*Turns, struck at the sight of him — instinctively draws back, half afraid*). Monsieur . . .

JEAN. Come with me. I can find room for you on a balcony.

JEANETTE. But you — Who are you?

JEAN. I am Comte Jean du Barry, very much at your service, Mademoiselle.

JEANETTE. Oh! Comte Jean du Barry.

JEAN. There will be another lady present — (*impressively*) — Madame la Marquise de Quesnoy.

JEANETTE. Yes, I've just sold her some hats.

JEAN. She has taken a violent fancy to you.

(*The Marquise appears at the door.*)

MARQUISE. Yes, my dear, come and sit on my balcony.

JEANETTE. Yes, yes, but just wait a moment, please.

JEAN. We'll wait outside.

MARQUISE (*To Jean*). Good. She'll come.

(*They go outside to wait.*)

JEANETTE (*Seeing Hortense re-enter*). Hortense, let me borrow a hat. The calèche I'm wearing is not elegant. (*Snatches a hat from the table.*) The prettiest one here . . . No, this won't do.

HORTENSE. Here you are, my dear — here's a hat that —

JEANETTE. No, no, no! I am going out with a gallant and a Marquise. Where's the hat we are just sending home to the Princess Condé? I'll wear that . . . she'll never know. (*Brings down half a dozen boxes which she sets on a chair.*) No, no, no, no. (*Finding the hat belonging to the Princess.*) Ah, here it is! (*To Denys who re-enters.*) Denys, see if they're waiting outside — a gentleman and a lady — a Count and the Marquise — and say that I am coming. (*Denys rushes to draw the curtains.*) Never mind — I'm ready now. Oh, look at me . . . Look at me . . . I'm going to see the King pass and in the Princess de Condé's hat. Ha, ha! Ta-ra-ta-ta! . . . Good-bye.

(*Goes off, fanning herself.*)

(*Hortense, exhausted from running about, sits in a chair, her hat awry, panting. Denys stands looking at the pile of boxes.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

Jeanette's apartments, adjoining Marquise de Quesnoy's gambling rooms.

"The Game Called Destiny."

SCENE: *As Mademoiselle Jeanette never went back to Labille's after she ran out to see the King pass by, her attic room has given way to a luxurious salon with silken walls and draperies. A gilded clock, supported by chubby Cupids, stands over the fireplace and ticks away the feverish hours in La Gourdan's gambling house.*

A table with a chair is near the fireplace so that a gallant may have a glass of wine with his dreams or to console himself for his losses.

A gaily-painted piano adorns the scene; and below it is a seat on which a pair of lovers can sit — and no doubt do — to whisper sweet nothings.

A little desk (handy when one wishes to answer a love letter) is placed against the wall and near it is a sofa with soft cushions. Violets are scattered about the room which is lighted by candles.

Doors lead to Jeanette's bedroom, to the hall and of course to the card-tables.

A panel (in reality a door) is set in the wall at back. It has a device by which one outside may peep in and one already in the room may peep out.

The rich rugs, the gilded carvings, — in fact, the entire surroundings, — show that the little milliner of the rue St. Honoré has taken a step up (or down) in the world. But while she is given every luxury, the sole purpose of her stay is to entertain rich men, gentlemen of rank, dandies of the day, who come in for a game of cards; in fact, the Duc de Richelieu himself (Marshal of France and son of the distinguished Cardinal) is about to drop in soon after the curtain rises: we might say that even now he is in the wings, awaiting his cue.

As the curtain goes up, Jean du Barry enters to find the old Marquise already in the room.

JEAN. Is Jeanette in?

MARQUISE. For the moment, yes. She cannot be depended upon. Last night she suddenly disappeared.

JEAN. I know.

MARQUISE. I hope she will not keep the crowd waiting again.

JEAN. She will. She has a new fancy: to ride out of Paris into the country to see the dawn break. (*Noticing Denys.*) Why in the devil's name are you hanging about? (*Denys bows and leaves the room.*) He's too damned devoted to her: you should never have brought him from the milliner's shop.

MARQUISE. She would have him, my dear Jean.

JEAN. Do you know why she behaves in this outlandish fashion? She has that guardsman, Cossé, so deep in her heart that your cunning claws cannot drag him out — magician that you are with your love-traps. She is fretting for him day and night. Jarni! The richest men in France are after her — and she will not let me manage her affairs. She chats, flirts with her fan, bewitches them with her pretty tricks, and then, pst! — disappears with a (*imitating her*) good-night. It won't do.

MARQUISE. I suppose we must make the best of it while it lasts. At least they come to see her and stay to play cards with you. Business is improving.

JEAN. Yes, they come once — twice — but they don't come again. We cannot hold her: she's uncertain.

MARQUISE. Then, my dear Jean, why don't you, the wonderful heart-breaker, make love to her yourself?

JEAN. I do, but — pfft! She cares no more for me than for a pinch of her perfumed powder.

MARQUISE. There's old Cazotte: he lets you win merely to talk of her and she won't let him kiss her hand. We shall lose him next. As you say, she is too uncertain.

JEAN. That girl could make a fool of any man alive, if she tried, and now, by God, she shall. She must hold people here. She —

(*But the Marquise has hastened off to keep her eye on the tables.*)

DENYS (*Appearing*). Monsieur le Duc de Richelieu is coming up the stairs.

JEAN (*Amazed*). Richelieu? Richelieu? Here? Hm . . .

RICHELIEU (*Entering*). Ah! Jean du Barry.

JEAN. Monsieur le Maréchal, I am honored.

RICHELIEU. Er — are we alone?

JEAN. Certainly.

RICHELIEU (*To Denys*). Beg Monsieur to come in. I am glad to meet you once more, Jean du Barry. (*His hand on his heart — bowing.*) As my great-uncle, the Cardinal, used to say: "'Tis the one we seldom see, we love the most."

(*He turns to Jeanette's dressing-case and uses her lip rouge.*)

EAN (*After returning Richelieu's bow, asks himself this question, point-blank*). What's in the wind?

(*Monsieur de Maupeou, the Lord Chancellor of France, a sallow man, about fifty-six years old, with piercing black eyes and a strong face, appears on the threshold. He is followed by Lebel, the King's valet, a pompous, middle-aged person with enormous influence.*)

AUPEOU. I thought you were alone.

EAN (*Who has caught a glimpse of Maupeou before he lifted the mask which he holds up, asks himself another question*). Maupeou, the Lord Chancellor . . . What does it mean?

ICHELIEU (*Apart*). Jean du Barry . . . he can tell us all we want to know. Lebel, go back and say to His Majesty that we shall return with a full description of the lady from her favorite perfume to the very buckles on her dainty slippers. (*Lebel bows and disappears. To Jean.*) A certain Mademoiselle Jeanette lives here, I believe . . . They tell me she is a gay companion — this jolly milliner?

EAN. Denys, some madeira.

(*Motions to the gentlemen to seat themselves. Denys brings the madeira to them.*)

ICHELIEU. You discovered her, I believe?

EAN (*To Denys*). That is all.

(*Denys goes out.*)

ICHELIEU. Come, come, Monsieur: can you not answer?

EAN. With pleasure, if the gentlemen will explain what game we play. Lay your cards upon the table . . . let me see what you have in your hands.

ICHELIEU. Monsieur!

AUPEOU. Come — let us go.

EAN. When the Lord Chancellor — (*Maupeou starts — dropping his mask*) — and a Marshal of France honor Jean du Barry, the roué and gambler, is it to ask him to play in the dark?

ICHELIEU. Come, come, Comte Jean du Barry, you exaggerate. Since you violate an incognito, I will ring for Mademoiselle Jeanette. She shall tell us herself.

JEAN. Pardon: 'twould be useless. You must explain your errand to me.

RICHELIEU. The matter is not worth explaining . . . It chanced to-day that His Majesty described a woman he saw at the opera — my lackeys found 'twas Mademoiselle Jeanette. Your game, as you are pleased to call it, turns out to be the — er — caprice of a moment.

JEAN. The King . . . My God, I hold a trump card and never guessed how to play it! Thank you for reminding me that a petticoat has always ruled France and Jeanette wears a damned enticing one.

(*He throws himself on the couch. His worries are over.*)

MAUPEOU. Is this Gascon mad?

JEAN. In Gascony we fly high or not at all.

MAUPEOU. Fa! Let us be off.

RICHELIEU. Careful . . . we dare not return to His Majesty without arranging a meeting. (*To Jean.*) What do you mean?

JEAN. That the bid card is still under the table.

RICHELIEU. Damme, 'tis an amusing devil!

MAUPEOU (*Apart*). The fellow is intolerable.

RICHELIEU (*One be-ribboned leg over the arm-chair — sips his wine*). Sh . . .

JEAN. Jarni! The King must have set his heart upon this woman, when it brings you here, gentlemen.

MAUPEOU. Oh!

JEAN. The King has grown hard to please . . . 'Tis a miracle that another woman can attract his fancy.

RICHELIEU. You exaggerate.

JEAN. And you two are going to make the most of it . . . I can see that.

MAUPEOU. 'Tis absurd to say that we —

JEAN. You are. Your star is waning for want of a favorite at Court. With the death of your protégé, the Pompadour, the King turns from you to his Minister, Choiseul, your bitterest enemy.

RICHELIEU. Tattle of the wine shop.

JEAN. If some fair lady does not turn the King's favor from Choiseul . . . *Mort de ma vie*, I shall not wonder to hear that you are both banished.

(*Maupeou hastily puts down his glass. Jean has hit the nail on the head.*)

MAUPEOU. Do you dare, you gambler!

RICHELIEU. Let him continue.

JEAN. That is why you are bent on creating a *new* favorite . . . But there must be three behind the throne — three; for I play the game with you, and for money — money — or 'twill end suddenly.

MAUPEOU (*Rising*). Insolent! With a stroke of my pen, I could sweep you out of France.

JEAN. But you will not; for I can be of service to you. Do not forget . . . no woman can become an acknowledged favorite unless she bears a title — and I can make La Vaubernier, Madame la Comtesse du Barry. (*Calls.*) Guillaume? Guillaume?

RICHELIEU. You? Why, you are married.

(*Guillaume du Barry enters from the gambling room, quite drunk.*)

JEAN. Ah, but I have a brother, Comte Guillaume du Barry, who would wed the devil's daughter for a hundred thousand francs. You would, my dear brother, would you not?

GUILLAUME. With pleasure.

JEAN. And then, you drunken devil, you must get out and go home to Toulouse, where you can live in a wine cask. Take yourself away.

(*Guillaume goes out.*)

RICHELIEU. He is sublime. He is really sublime, this Jean du Barry.

MAUPEOU. He's inspired. There is no other way out of it.

JEAN. Messieurs, the cards are now on the table. (*He passes snuff to Maupeou, who deigns to accept.*) Ah, 'tis a damned pretty game! Shall we play it against Choiseul, gentlemen?

(*All use snuff at the same time.*)

RICHELIEU. We have arranged a little supper at Lebel's — the King's valet de chambre — at midnight to the minute . . . Bring her.

(*Richelieu and Maupeou leave, bowing ceremoniously.*)

JEAN (*Taking a pack of cards from his pocket — cuts*). Will that uncertain woman . . . Damme, the Jack of Hearts! 'Tis young Cossé . . . We must get rid of him.

JEANETTE (*Enters, followed by Denys*). Denys, I feel a draft, close the window. Have my head ribbons come?

DENYS. Yes, Mademoiselle.

JEANETTE. Where are they?

DENYS. On the spinnet, Mademoiselle.

JEANETTE. All wrong. I was a better milliner myself. Open that window. I am warm.

JEAN. Why, Jeanette, what is the matter with you to-day?

JEANETTE. I am restless.

JEAN. Take a little sip of this.

(*Handing her a glass of wine.*)

JEANETTE (*Hands the wine to Denys behind Jean's back. Denys drinks the wine*). Ah, that makes me feel better. Oh, 'tis strong.

JEAN. Jeanette, you should be very happy. When I think of what you were, and what *I've* made you — why, the very paste on your hand came out of my pocket.

JEANETTE. Ha, your pocket! Do you see these? (*Throwing some cards in the air.*) They're shopmen's cards. I scatter them about and eternally answer questions of: "Where did you get this? Where did you get that?" I sing, sing, sing their addresses from morning till night — otherwise I wouldn't have a rag to my back. Your pocket — Ha! (*To Denys.*) As if I would take anything from him! Why, when I walk in the streets, I feel in honor bound to hold my skirts high, that the very stockings on my legs may cry out: "Look at me, ladies and gentlemen, look at me! I came from Pagelle's in the rue de Bourbon." (*Sits.*) Ph! Your pocket!

JEAN. Think of the nest you left, and then compare it with this paradise.

JEANETTE. Indeed? The only paradise I ever knew was when I sold glass diamonds and brass jewelry through the country lanes . . . Ah, those are the places — the country lanes — when it doesn't rain. They won't let you go into the houses — they're afraid you'll steal. All I wanted then was to see the sun shine; to smell the grass and have a sou in my hand for my supper — and Heavens! I was the Queen of Sheba in my own right. Taratata, why didn't I stay there!

JEAN. A good thing you did not . . . Jeanette, I have news — news that will dazzle you; but first the Opera and then a little supper.

JEANETTE. No, I won't go to supper with you. I won't go with anybody.

JEAN. Thinking of that Cossé again? You're in love. You're breaking your heart because you know he's the one man you cannot wheedle.

JEANETTE. Perhaps.

JEAN. Come now, why should you care? Jeanette, I'm your best friend: let me guide you. You and I together — Jarni! Why not, eh?

JEANETTE. Don't touch me — don't touch me, Jean du Barry, or I'll — Don't look at me like that — and don't say such things to me. I don't like it — I don't like it.

JEAN. I have an appointment for you to-night with — er — a certain Monsieur Lebel. Understand this: you'll go if I have to carry you; so don't run off again.

(*He goes into the gambling rooms.*)

JEANETTE. Denys, I'm miserable . . . My cloak — bring it and I'll go out . . . No, I won't.

DENYS. Mademoiselle, what is it?

JEANETTE. Denys, do you remember the day we left Labille's shop? . . . Tell me again: what did Monsieur de Cossé say when he came for me and found me gone?

DENYS. He was heart-broken.

JEANETTE. Are you quite sure he knows that I am here?

DENYS. Yes, he knows.

JEANETTE. And he has not followed me . . . Denys, I want

to go back to the shop: do you think Labille would take me? Tell him I'll work this time.

DENYS. Labille will let you dance on the hat boxes, if you'll only come back. He always said you had a way with a wing and a buckle.

JEANETTE. We'll go. We'll go back in the morning. I want to make hats, hats, hats. Tell Sophie to pack up.

DENYS. Yes, Mademoiselle. Shall I say that at seven o'clock we are to leave for Labille's?

JEANETTE. Now, Denys, think of beginning as late as that! No, we'll go at five so we can help with the cleaning. Oh, I'm so happy — I can breathe now . . . Back to the millinery shop and — (*Denys goes to give orders to Sophie. A Gypsy Mendicant appears outside the window, a gaunt, yellow old hag. She taps on the pane. Jeanette starts back and calls.*) Denys, come back. Look!

MENDICANT. Charity, lady.

DENYS. Go away.

MENDICANT. Charity.

(*Denys starts to push her back.*)

JEANETTE. No, no. Here, give her this gold piece.

MENDICANT. Thank you, lady. (*She looks at the coin, astonished.*) Ah! We'll try to make a bright future for that. I'll tell your fortune in a witch's bowl. (*The hag sinks to her knees, taking a bowl from the bag which hangs at her side.*) Water, my master.

(*Denys hands the caraffe to the hag who pours water into the bowl and adds a few drops from her phial.*)

MENDICANT. The water laps in little waves, restless . . . restless . . . New things go fast in the depths. (*Holds up the bowl and twirls it round her head.*) Now for the man!

JEANETTE. The man, Denys, the man!

MENDICANT. If the water flies, he is of the people; if 'tis all in the bowl, he is noble. (*Twirls bowl round her head — looks astonished.*) Ah! 'Tis suddenly as still as death . . . Only one can hold the magic of my bowl — a King. (*She blows into the bowl, passes her hand over it and bows very low.*) Lady,

I see Paris at your feet . . . I see power . . . I see triumph. More: wherever the name of France is read, yours is read, too. I see —

(*She pauses, frightened. The room has grown darker and Denys holds up a lighted candle.*)

JEANETTE. What do you see?

MENDICANT. 'Tis dark . . . No, no, it cannot be that! 'Tis my eyes . . . I am old . . . Close . . . Closer . . . (*Jeanette takes a candle from Denys and holds it over the bowl.*) 'Tis true . . . (*The Mendicant gives a cry of horror.*) Oh!

JEANETTE. What? What is it?

MENDICANT. Have a care . . . the candle . . . 'tis burning blue. Look behind you . . . the red shadow . . . (*The candle drops to the floor and goes out. The room is in blackness. The Mendicant tries to laugh.*) Ha, ha! 'Twas a jest! Ha, ha! (*A knock sounds on the door.*)

JEANETTE. Denys, lights . . . lights . . . lights. All the lights. (*The hag is heard in the distance, laughing faintly.*) Shut the window — lock it — lock it . . . I'm afraid . . . I want to go back to Labille's.

(*She stands trembling.*)

DENYS (*Who has gone to the door*). Monsieur de Cossé-Brissac.

(*Cossé enters in undress uniform, his face stern and pale. Denys leaves the room.*)

JEANETTE (*Under her breath*). O God! O God! . . . . Monsieur de Cossé, you came after all.

COSSÉ (*Coldly*). You are surprised to see me, Mademoiselle, but not more than I am to be here. I have tried to forget you, but when I saw you yesterday in the street with La Gourdan . . .

JEANETTE. Yes . . . I saw you too. I knew then that I had not forgotten . . . I could not forget.

COSSÉ. Mademoiselle — in this place! How could you!

JEANETTE. Monsieur de Cossé, I did mean to come back that day I left Labille's.

COSSÉ. But you did not. Why?

JEANETTE. I don't know . . . it happened this way instead . . .

You know how things do happen when you're out in fine company . . . you sometimes change your mind. I stepped outside to see the King pass . . . They talked and talked . . . and, listening to their fine ideas . . . the little millinery shop seemed far away; the more they talked, the farther away it seemed until . . . I never went back at all. Oh, I'm so sorry! I always am sorry when I do something I shouldn't, but I'm always sorry too late.

COSSÉ. Of what could you have been thinking?

JEANETTE. Trinkets, trinkets — just trinkets . . . I can't explain it in any other way — trinkets, Monsieur. I love pretty things: they're my curse.

(*She sits.*)

COSSÉ. You told me you had never loved anyone . . . I have been mad with jealousy, for you have given the place I asked for in your heart to some one else.

JEANETTE. No, no, no, I have not.

COSSÉ. No?

JEANETTE (*Crying*). I am very unhappy.

COSSÉ. Mademoiselle, let me take you away from here — from Paris.

JEANETTE. Will you?

COSSÉ. Let us begin again where we ended that day at Labille's. Come with me to the fields of St. Gervais . . . just now they're full of violets. You said you loved them and —

JEANETTE. Yes, I know. I know where they grow. Let us go to-night. I'll get my long cloak and my hat. (*Running to the door.*) Sophie? Oh, she's not there. (*Taking up one of the candles.*) You'll have to come with me. I'm afraid to go alone. You don't mind, do you?

COSSÉ. Of course not.

JEANETTE (*Giving him a candle to carry*). It's dark in there and . . . I've had such a start to-night. (*Taking his arm.*) Come! Oh, I'm so happy that you are here! We're off for the fields, aren't we? We're off for the fields.

COSSÉ. Yes, we're off for the fields; but I'm asking you to leave this place to-night . . . not to come back at all.

JEANETTE. Of course.

COSSÉ. Ah, Mademoiselle, you don't understand . . .

JEANETTE. Oh, yes I do, you want me for your sweetheart.

COSSÉ. Yes.

JEANETTE. Then I'll be your sweetheart.

COSSÉ. There's a little house at St. Gervais, kept by my old concierge, quiet, peaceful — the flowers you love so well growing up to the very doorstep.

JEANETTE. It must be heavenly.

COSSÉ. The most restless heart in the world could find peace there. Let me take you with me! Give me back my faith in you. Let me see in you the woman I want . . . for my wife.

JEANETTE. I would do anything on this earth for you . . . for what you have just said to me. . . . At this very moment, I would —

(*Quite overcome, she sits down.*)

COSSÉ. Jeanette!

JEANETTE. You have swept me off my feet . . . This little cottage you speak of, with the flowers growing up to the doorstep . . . to be there with you . . . It's a beautiful thought . . . it can't be real, but it's mad enough to tempt me.

COSSÉ. Ah!

JEANETTE. But for how long?

COSSÉ. Have you no faith in me?

JEANETTE. You? I've no faith in myself. Sometimes I don't know what to think of myself. I hate Jean du Barry, I know the sort of woman La Gourdan is — what she wants to make of me — I detest this place; there's something about it, — the excitement, the danger . . . it's a dreadful place. . . . You must know that terrible things happen over the cards, but the very atmosphere of the gambling rooms fascinated me . . . kept me here . . . I could not get away. There's something in me — whatever it is, it's bad — that I cannot tear out . . . It's in my blood . . . it's my destiny to have everything in the world and to be

utterly wretched because I have it. O dear, O dear! It's my destiny.

COSSÉ. No, no.

JEANETTE. It is or why should I always take a direction I never mean to take? At Labille's I dreamt of loving you — I used to watch for you . . . And even when I was laughing and talking with others, it was really you with whom I laughed and talked. And those violets . . . I was mad to pick them that day with you . . . for I had a sweet dream of happiness and you were part of it; but I left you, didn't I? I hurt you . . . and yet there's not an hour, not a minute but it all comes back to me . . . the promise I broke . . . the peace of the country . . . the soft air . . . the fresh wind. I've wanted your love — I've wanted your love; I long to take all you offer me; the life you speak of; the life I never knew; but I'm afraid to let you stake your happiness on your faith in me . . . I'm afraid to give myself into a good man's keeping . . . for one day I should find myself out — and then — off — off again to the old follies, to the — the something that pushes me on — on — on — and always away from the things I love best. No, no, no, it could not last — it could not last: nothing ever does last with me.

COSSÉ. Because you will not let it last.

JEANETTE. Ah! Why try to change myself? I'm what the old Curé called me when I was a child — a thing of the winds. "You change — you veer," he said — "you have the soul of a butterfly." And he was right. What I am — I am; what I feel — I feel; what I believe — I know. Stand clear of me. Keep away . . . keep away. I knew to-day . . . there was an old woman here who talked to me. She was right: I shall rise with fate, and then with fate — shall fall! Keep away . . . keep away.

COSSÉ. Ah, no, if you really love — you will be everything on God's earth a man wants you to be: that's in your face.

JEANETTE. You are the first to see it there . . . (*Holding out her hand.*) Do not see it again.

COSSÉ. This time you shall not go, Jeanette. If I could once

make you dream of love, why not again? I'll not rest until we two are lovers. Come away with me — come. Say yes . . . say yes . . . say yes. . . . You're in my arms . . . I am kissing you . . . You cannot refuse me now.

JEANETTE. Oh, you have a way with you to make a woman think twice . . . Cossé, Cossé.

COSSÉ (*Holding her in his arms*). That means you'll come with me.

JEANETTE. Yes, yes, I'll come.

COSSÉ. Slip into a cloak — you'll find me waiting below with a carriage.

JEANETTE. I cannot say whether 'tis love or whether I am mad . . . (*Fans herself — he kisses her again.*) 'Tis love. I am happy . . . I am happy . . .

COSSÉ. Jeanette. . . .

(*She goes off to get her cloak. He is about to follow her.*)

JEAN (*Suddenly appearing*). Oh, you are here.

COSSÉ. I am taking Mademoiselle Jeanette away from this house.

JEAN. You are taking — And do you think I'll let my plans tumble down for you? Jarni! We have higher aims for Mademoiselle Jeanette. She was not brought here to be your mistress.

COSSÉ. Enough! I'll kill you if you follow her or speak to her again.

RICHELIEU (*Entering excitedly. To Jean*). Quick — lights in your halls. (*Jean motions to Denys to exit.*) A mad impulse has taken His Majesty — he follows me now, incognito.

COSSÉ. The King?

RICHELIEU (*Seeing Lebel enter*). Lebel . . . He is here. (*Lebel is followed by six attendants who, at a gesture from Lebel, go in various directions to make sure that the coast is clear for the King.*) Ah! What guardsman is this? (*Cossé turns — facing Richelieu.*) Oh, Monsieur de Cossé . . . You cannot leave here now. Go into that room — the doors are guarded. (*Richelieu opens a door and, as Cossé passes in, he puts his finger*

to his lips.) You understand? (*Cossé, not knowing what it is all about, goes off. Richelieu closes the door after Cossé.*) Call her. Be careful. No warning and no ceremony.

LEBEL (*Warning Richelieu*). Monsieur le Maréchal. (*Richelieu draws Jean aside. The King appears, wearing a long cloak, a mask in his hand. He has a slight air of ennui — his face is sad.*) Will Your Majesty be seated?

KING. Dominique, remember that I am merely a messenger from the King. I have a fancy to catch Mademoiselle off her guard. Richelieu?

RICHELIEU (*Comes down — aside to the King*). Jean du Barry — Monsieur du Barry.

(*Jean comes down; Richelieu catches him deftly under the arms as he would kneel.*)

KING. Monsieur le Maréchal has told me of his delightfully amusing interview with Mademoiselle Vaubernier to-day . . . 'Tis something in this world to be diverted . . . Where is this — er —

JEANETTE (*Calling, as she enters*). Come, Sophie, come. (*She wears a large field hat, a long cloak, and carries a walking-stick and a gilt bird-cage. A flower-pot with a blooming plant is tucked under her arm. Sophie, laden with boxes, bags and baskets, follows Jeanette.*)

RICHELIEU. What is this? What is this?

JEAN (*Respectfully*). Mademoiselle Vaubernier, what does this mean?

JEANETTE. You may as well know it, Jean du Barry. I'm leaving — so adieu. Come, Sophie.

RICHELIEU (*Stepping in front of her*). A messenger — (*pointing*) — from His Majesty, the King, to Mademoiselle.

JEANETTE. Ah! (*She drops a deep curtsy to Lebel.*) 'Tis an honor.

(*Richelieu gestures towards the King.*)

RICHELIEU. The King's messenger.

JEANETTE. Oh! (*Curtsies to the King.*) Adieu, Monsieur. (*She tries to open the door.*) Why, the door is locked.

RICHELIEU. Mademoiselle, when His Majesty's gentlemen

come upon a royal errand, 'tis an affair of state; the house is guarded.

JEANETTE. Then I'm to be kept waiting here, am I? Look, Sophie — he must be standing outside. Do you see him? (*Sophie places her bundles on the floor and goes to the window to peep out.*)

RICHELIEU. Come, Mademoiselle, His Majesty's envoy would speak with you.

JEANETTE. I wish you would please say to the King — O here — (*She takes off the bunch of violets she is wearing.*) Give these to His Majesty with my compliments. I'm in haste. I beg your pardon. (*She hits the King with her stick in advancing to present the violets.*) I feel very much honored, Monsieur. (*Sophie motions from the window that Cossé is not outside.*) Not there? Where do you suppose he is?

RICHELIEU. His Majesty has deigned to express his admiration for you. A meeting might be arranged —

JEANETTE. Tell His Majesty that I am honored, but really I cannot see him to-day because I am leaving. (*Turning, she stumbles over the packages Sophie has placed on the floor.*) Taratata! What in the —

JEAN (*Aside*). Fool!

RICHELIEU. Mademoiselle!

LEBEL. His Majesty . . .

JEANETTE. What do I care for His Majesty? I'm going to the country to pick violets. Let me out of here.

JEAN. Sh! Sh!

RICHELIEU. But, Mademoiselle, the King . . .

JEANETTE. The what?

RICHELIEU. The King.

JEANETTE (*Trying the knob of the locked door*). The King? The King can go to the devil! Open this door and let me out. Open this door, I say. Do you hear? Open this door.

RICHELIEU (*To Jean*). 'Tis ended. His Majesty is insulted. Oh! (*Louis holds his sides with suppressed laughter and lowers his mask. Richelieu, seeing that he is pleased, follows his example and laughs. The King motions to them to draw apart.*)

JEANETTE (*Who has swept down to the King — in tears*). You let me out of here or I'll —

KING (*His mask half concealing his face*). Surely Mademoiselle must have some grave reason to ignore His Majesty's messages?

JEANETTE. I have.

KING. 'Tis said that Louis' displeasure is something to be feared.

JEANETTE. What do I care for that? Why — if I stood in Louis' presence, I would snap my fingers in his face and say: "Open that door. There's a young man below stairs — I love him and I want to go to him."

KING. Ah, you are bold! . . . But 'tis that that fascinates me.

(*Puts his arm around her.*)

JEANETTE. Stop it, Monsieur. (*Retreats.*) Open the door and let me go — (*Nudges him — coaxingly*) please, please.

KING. Surely Mademoiselle will give me time to deliver my message. His Majesty bids me say that he loves you and —

JEANETTE (*Looking at him — shaking her head*). Oh, no!

KING. He does . . . he bade me say he loves you.

JEANETTE. Ah, Monsieur, the King picks his flowers in hothouses; not among the weeds.

KING. But he loves you.

JEANETTE. Then take this kiss to him — only first open the door, so I may go.

KING (*Kissing her hand*). He's mad over you . . . The King is mad over you.

(*Jean du Barry, unseen by them, opens the door of the room in which Cossé is waiting, and goes off. All are off save the King and Jeanette.*)

JEANETTE. But the King has never seen me.

KING. He has . . . he has.

JEANETTE. When? When I was selling violets at his Palace gates — or carrying hats to his Court ladies?

KING. 'Tis this touch of nature in you that appeals to him . . . he is weary of pomp and pretense . . . he longs for your

friendship. Mademoiselle, this lover, this young man . . . the King will give him honors, titles — (*Cossé appears on the threshold of the room where he has waited*) and he will soon forget. (*Before she can make reply, the King impulsively seizes her wrist.*) Never have I met a woman like you . . . You enchant me. I adore you. I adore you. I — the King . . . Louis.

JEANETTE (*Astonished — awed*). The King?

KING. I shall make France kneel to you. (*Slips his ring on her finger.*) 'Tis a pledge. (*Takes her in his arms — she is still dazed.*) I love you . . . I love you . . . I'm mad for you . . . (*Kisses her hand — calls.*) Monsieur le Maréchal? (*To Richelieu who enters.*) She is charming. (*To Jean du Barry who follows Richelieu.*) Bring her to Lebel's to-night.

(*Jean bows. All go off.*)

COSSÉ (*Entering — after a slight pause*). Well, Mademoiselle?

JEANETTE. Cossé . . .

COSSÉ. Well? (*Jeanette stands dazed.*) You call me back, Mademoiselle, to offer me the honor of sharing you with the King. I saw you in his arms. I heard . . . Ah, you did well to tell me to stand clear of you — a woman who apes the simple ways of a child. 'Twas that that tricked me into loving you, pah! Your life's a lie; your tryst was a lie; your promises — lies. Your very resolutions were lies, because you knew you would not keep them. A woman who prefers the glamour of this hell to a clean, sweet life in the country . . . Fa! (*As Jeanette starts to speak.*) You do! And I asked you to be my wife — you!

JEANETTE (*Hurt*). Ah!

COSSÉ. 'Tis a thousand pities His Majesty bought Mademoiselle before we picked those violets.

(*He leaves in anger.*)

JEANETTE. Cossé! (*Taking off the ring which the King has given to her, she throws it down as Denys enters.*) Denys, bring him back. Go, go, bring him back. Cossé has gone. Bring him back.

DENYS. What shall I say?

JEANETTE. Anything — everything — only hurry, hurry.
(*Denys rushes off. A pause. Denys re-enters.*)

DENYS. He would not listen. If you had only explained —

JEANETTE. Explained? Denys, if a King suddenly dropped at your feet and said "I love you!", would you not be struck dumb? (*Going up to the window — calls.*) Cossé! Cossé! Ah! Gone — gone — and he won't even look at me. He's gone. . . . And that's love — that's love . . . A man who could have had my soul . . . I sent a King to the devil for him . . . and that's my thanks. (*Changing.*) Where is that ring? Where is that ring? (*Begins to search for it on the rug.*) If ever I see him again, may I be blind . . . (*Tearing off her hat.*) If ever I hear his voice again, may I be deaf . . . (*Tearing off her cloak.*) If ever I —
(*Jean re-enters. Seeing her and struck by her manner, he touches her on the shoulder.*)

JEAN. Well, what do you say?

JEANETTE. Ah, you! (*Beating him back with her hands.*) Keep away from me. Keep away or —

JEAN. What have I done?

JEANETTE. Done? You gave me five minutes to love. 'Twas all over in one. Ah, you little cheat!
(*Savagely she smashes a Cupid which is sitting innocently on the spinnet.*)

JEAN. What has happened?

JEANETTE. What always happens to two fools in love — hell!

JEAN. Good!

JEANETTE. I'll never try to love again — never, never.

JEAN. Then come: we have a great night before us. Let us eat, drink and be merry.

JEANETTE (*Seizing a string of roses and winding them about her throat*). Yes, let us eat, drink and be merry.

CURTAIN

ACT III

Madame la Comtesse du Barry holds a petit levée in the Palace of Versailles at noon.

SCENE: *At a glance, one recognizes the room as a beautiful bedchamber occupied by a great lady of a frivolous turn of mind. The richness of the peignoir thrown carelessly over a chair, the splendid buckles on the high-heeled slippers lying on the floor, the drawn curtains at this late hour of the morning — all proclaim the fact that a lady of fashion has not roused herself to the dull cares of the day.*

An entrance at the back lets in or keeps out those who would pay court to the acknowledged favorite of His Most Christian Majesty, Louis XV. And here, in bed, we find Jeanette, the milliner, — now Madame la Comtesse du Barry, wife of the drunken and exiled brother of Jean, the gambler, sitting up in the midst of furs, lace flounces, silken sheets, pillows boasting embroidered crowns — in fact, all the kickshaws of the period.

Madame la Comtesse du Barry wears jewels and a wonderful night-robe, and resembles nothing so much as a doll sitting up in state at a child's party. Above her head, Cupids smile down, and above the Cupids is a high gilded cornice holding soft draperies cunningly caught back at the sides to allow an unobstructed view of the lady in the bed.

A candelabrum is placed on a table at the foot of the couch and a little night-table, held up by fat-legged Cupids, stands beside the bed.

Luxurious chairs and beautiful rugs grace the scene.

Here, during the morning reception in bed, comes His Reverence, the Papal Nuncio himself, His Reverence, the Abbé Terray (Minister of Finance, who loosens his hold on the state purse-strings when Madame du Barry smiles upon him), His Eminence, the Duke de Richelieu, the Lord Chancellor de Maupeou, and Jean du Barry (now engaged in the profitable pastime of blackmail). Here, tradesmen with their novelties and jewels mingle with gallant statesmen and great ladies. It is even said that Her Royal Highness, the little Princess Marie Antoinette, graced the scene in her sixteenth year.

At any rate, she treated Madame du Barry so coldly at Court that the King complained to the Austrian Ambassador who, in turn, complained to the Austrian Queen, Marie Theresa, who (smelling powder) complained to her daughter, Marie Antoinette, who promptly received Madame du Barry with gracious smiles — and Austria breathed freely once more.

Louis, the well-beloved, thrust his somewhat rusty sword back in its scabbard and "it was all mighty well."

Her Grace, the Duchesse de Grammont, a great lady of her day, stepped upon the train of Jeanette's gown — and laughed. Her laughter ceased abruptly, however, when she received the King's letter of exile — two years — no less.

Jeanette du Barry, without politics or malice, without love, without reproaches, with very little desire to please the King, appeared upon the scene in the very nick of time. But for two tragic figures in the background, Madame du Barry could never have existed.

The Queen (now dead) had been for years a sad and sombre figure. Madame de Pompadour (Du Barry's predecessor — also gone from the world) was a politician in petticoats, a slave to the King, the head and heart of a group of brilliant people, and the most tragic figure of her day: for, after having worked tooth and nail for Louis, the well-beloved, she lived to see the little door walled up — the little door connecting the King's apartment with her own. Accepting the situation gracefully, she managed to hold the King until the end by the sheer force of her mentality; but, no doubt, time passed heavily for Louis.

As the curtain is about to rise, we find Du Barry at the height of her power — on the top spit of glory — quite unchanged — the same jovial, good-natured scamp of a milliner.

She is lying on the gilded bed ready for the gossip of the day, always trying to forget Cossé (and never succeeding), utterly unconscious that she will be the last love of Louis' life and that one fatal April day will dawn when — but we are ahead of our plot.

We hear some one knocking. Sophie opens the door and admits Lebel, the King's valet.

SOPHIE. Yes, Monsieur Lebel?

LEBEL. His Majesty's compliments to —

SOPHIE (*Pointing to bed*). Sh!

LEBEL. His Majesty will visit Madame la Comtesse after her *petit levée.*

(*Lebel goes out and a lackey brings in a gold breakfast-tray with food.*)

SOPHIE. I hope Madame will be happier this morning.

DENYS. Happier! From the hour she married that Guillaume du Barry, I've wondered that she laughs at all.

SOPHIE. There's one redeeming thing about him: we haven't seen him since the wedding.

DENYS. He's off in Toulouse, the drunken blackguard, boasting that he sold his name to the greatest lady in France.

DU BARRY (*Suddenly kicking up the bedclothes*). Zamore, come here.

(*Zamore, a little negro, runs on.*)

ZAMORE. Hi, hi, Madame.

(*He sits by her bed.*)

DU BARRY (*To Sophie who brings an armful of flowers*). Aren't they sweet? (*Reading a card.*) Madame la Duchesse de —

(*She pins a bunch of violets on her nightgown.*)

DENYS. Madame's coffee. Shall we open the doors for the *petit levée?*

DU BARRY. Ah! These receptions in bed. I'm tired of them.

DENYS. But it's the custom, and . . .

DU BARRY. Oh yes, I know, I know . . . a lot of people tumbling into your room, smiling, smirking — bowing down to the floor; every one of them ready to pick you to pieces — and all before you're up . . . Oh, a charming custom! (*Sipping her coffee.*) And that Richelieu and his pack, petting me and kissing my hand, when they'd like to bite it. One day we shall make them hop, Zamore.

ZAMORE. Hi! Hi!

(*Outside the roll of a drum is heard. Zamore dashes off as a bugle call sounds in the court-yard below.*)

DU BARRY. There! Denys, quick to the window — the King's Guard.

DENYS. Monsieur de Cossé is never with them now.

DU BARRY. But look again — look well.

DENYS. No, Madame, he is not there.

DU BARRY. What can have happened? For three months, Denys, he has not marched by.

DENYS. Ah, Madame, I can understand that he —

DU BARRY. It was not my fault that he went away. I came here to torture him. How foolish! How could I torture a man who had thrown me to the four winds of heaven, as he had. No, no, he does not care. I am the one to suffer. It's killing me . . . I love him and I cannot get over it — I cannot . . . and he is gone — gone where he will not see me and will soon forget me; that's what it means, Denys, he will forget me . . . If I could see him — no matter how much he despises me — it would be some comfort to me . . . but I don't know where to find him . . . Ah! it leaves me so helpless.

(*Opening the spring of a casket on the night table, she takes out a small portrait framed in gold.*)

DENYS. Ah, Madame, please! Yesterday when His Majesty's back was turned, I saw you staring at Monsieur de Cossé's picture, until I trembled.

DU BARRY. Denys, when a man strikes a woman, why does she let him do it again? Because she loves him and she cannot put him out of her heart. She cannot . . . She cannot . . . (*There is a knocking on the door.*) Why are you letting me think? Why are you letting me think?

(*Denys has opened the door and quickly shuts it as a voice is heard announcing in the corridor.*)

DENYS. The Captain of the King's Guard is at the door.

DU BARRY. In a moment . . .

(*She thrusts her bare feet into her slippers.*)

DENYS. Madame, did you send for him?

DU BARRY. Yes . . . to know what has become of Cossé.

DENYS. But to question the King's most loyal friend ——

and even now His Majesty is jealous of Madame's very shadow . . .

DU BARRY. When a woman loves some one — she is cunning. Zamore! (*Zamore enters. Du Barry points to her feet. He throws himself down. She slips her foot from under the spread, using his back for a footstool.*) Now show him in.

BRISSAC (*Entering*). Madame la Comtesse sent for me?

DU BARRY. Yes. (*She offers her hand. He appears not to see it, standing with his eyes downcast, his hand on the hilt of his sword.*) You are not gallant to-day. The courtiers kneel to me and kiss my hand.

BRISSAC. I am not a courtier, Madame la Comtesse, I am a soldier.

DU BARRY (*Motions him to be seated*). Then let us speak of soldiers, sir. (*She offers him wine — he declines.*) No? Every day I watch from my window to see the King's Guard march by . . . I know every face . . . when one is gone, of course I notice it. . . . Oh yes, indeed. (*Watching him out of the corner of her eye.*) You know the Guard is so loyal that it is like — like missing a part of France when one soldier is not there . . . I have seen a vacant place.

BRISSAC. My son's, — yes.

DU BARRY. Where is he?

BRISSAC. He left the Guard some time ago.

DU BARRY (*Quickly*). Yes, three months — (*catching herself*) you said three months — did you not? . . . Where did your son go?

BRISSAC. I do not know. There is a mystery in his going . . . I never quite understood. He was a loyal soldier — that is our religion, Madame, God and the King. And why he should go — disappear — leave the Guard he loved so well, I cannot understand.

DU BARRY. How you must miss him!

(*She looks at the portrait of Cossé.*)

DENYS. Madame!

(*She hides the portrait.*)

BRISSAC. I love him, Madame la Comtesse. He is all I have.

DU BARRY. Monsieur, I have enemies enough at Court without you. Will you tell me how I can win your friendship? Give me your hand. (*He does not take her hand.*) Why do you hate me?

BRISSAC. Because I love France first — then my King.

DU BARRY. Well?

BRISSAC. We are upon the brink of a Revolution — not to-day, nor to-morrow — but 'twill come, Madame la Comtesse, it will come.

DU BARRY. Well?

BRISSAC. Already the people are banding together — forming a league — and what wonder? On the edge of Paris, as far as the eye can reach, nothing but chateaux — chateaux — chateaux — but never a peasant's cottage. Anything is good enough for the miserable people — even now bread is denied them. The millions that Madame squanders are wrung from the poor through this terrible *pacte de famine*.

DU BARRY. What is that?

BRISSAC. Is it possible that you do not understand the cry of France for bread?

DU BARRY. Does France want bread?

BRISSAC. Is it possible you do not know that the Court has bought up every grain of wheat and the peasants must pay its price or starve?

DU BARRY. What?

BRISSAC. When you spoke of my son Cossé just now —

DU BARRY. Yes?

BRISSAC. His last words came back to me. . . .

DU BARRY. Well?

BRISSAC. Pardon . . . I am too bold, Madame la Comtesse.

DU BARRY. No, no; I want to hear what he said.

BRISSAC. "France is being bartered for Jeanette Vaubernier."

DU BARRY. Jeanette Vaubernier? Oh! So your son ignores my marriage. What else did he say?

BRISSAC. Bartered for a — er — a woman — and her baubles. It is infamous.

DU BARRY (*Jumps to her feet — holding the silken counterpane*). Infamous? Did he say infamous?

DENYS. Madame.

DU BARRY (*To Zamore*). Go, go, go, you annoy me! Go! (*Zamore goes out.*) Tell it again. (*Brissac is looking at her, amazed.*) You see I want to know what he — what people — say of me. Not that I care — I do not. Ha, ha, ha! But that name your son called me . . . You changed the word — yes, you did — you changed it to "woman". . . . He called me — what? What was it? Tell me.

BRISSAC. I . . .

DU BARRY. What?

DENYS (*Under his breath*). Madame, I cannot go on.

DU BARRY. What? What did he call me? I want to know. I will know. Ah, tell me. You shall not suffer for speaking the truth — no, no indeed. The King shall make you a Prince — more: I shall have this *pacte de famine* swept away — you shall see! Only tell me that name — tell me.

DENYS. No, no, Monsieur le Duc.

DU BARRY. How dare you? How dare you? Go! . . . No, Denys, forgive me. (*To Brissac.*) Please tell me . . . do. I command you to tell me! Say it . . . Say it . . . I beg of you — tell me.

BRISSAC. The word was "Courtesan."

DU BARRY. Yes, yes, that's true . . . I am, I am a . . . but why did you tell me, Monsieur le Duc? . . . Denys, if ever I am extravagant again, if ever I throw away money again, beat me, will you? Beat me. (*Getting out a box.*) Here . . . my jeweled butterflies, — worth a kingdom. They were given to me because I am — Take them — sell them for bread. (*Denys takes the box and places it on the table. She cries — striking at the pillow.*) My God! My God! How unhappy I am this morning . . . How unhappy I am this morning . . .

BRISSAC (*Rising*). Madame —

DENYS (*Aside to Brissac*). She has bad attacks of crying, Monsieur le Duc. Kindly pardon her.

DU BARRY. Oh, how unhappy I am! How unhappy I am!

DENYS. Madame . . . please.

DU BARRY (*Dropping on her knees beside the bed*). Cossé . . . Cossé . . .

BRISSAC (*Almost inaudible — struck*). Cossé!

DU BARRY. Do not . . . do not hate me . . . pity me; because I can never forget; because I do nothing but dream out the dream I began with you. Oh! If you could see me now, Cossé . . . (*She sits abjectly on the steps leading to her bed.*) I am almost a Queen . . . and look at me — look at me . . . (*Trying to stop crying.*) Hm! Hm! . . . I've had it all — power, splendor, pomp — everything. All day long I walk, walk, walk, through strings of little gilded rooms, and the Princes of the world wait outside for my pleasure; but to what does it all come? It ends in this: I want that little place in the fields of St. Gervais, where the flowers grow up to the doorstep . . . I want the man I love — your son, the man who hates me now . . . I want to be anything but a weak fool in the hands of Jean du Barry and Richelieu . . . I want — I want . . . Ah! No matter what I want, — here I am in a jail, a hole, a prison, a hell . . . Ah! (*She falls back on the bed, sobbing. A pause. Duc de Brissac looks at Denys as though realizing the truth for the first time.*) When I think . . . when I think that at this moment — this very moment — I might be in his arms, happy, free, decent, — if this King had never come into my life, — I — I could tear myself into ribbons.

DENYS. Madame . . .

DU BARRY (*Murmuring to herself in despair*). Into ribbons . . . into ribbons.

DENYS. Madame forgets that she is not alone.

DU BARRY. Almost a Queen, but a courtesan . . . yes, although he is a King, I am a courtesan. Oh, that word, that horrible word burns me, chokes me, kills me, damns me. I would give everything this whole world could offer . . . I would walk sightless through the streets; I would be old, hideous, to have a pure heart and a decent conscience. And you

cannot get them back, once they are gone — you cannot, you cannot, you cannot do it! Oh, I'm tired of it all . . . tired . . . tired . . . tired . . . (*Starting up suddenly.*) I'm going to end it now. (*As she reaches the window, Denys catches her and draws her back.*) Let me go! Let me —

DENYS. Not to that window . . . Please, Madame —

DU BARRY. Let me go, I tell you —

BRISSAC (*Restraining her*). Madame!

DU BARRY. Let me go or — Oh!

(*As she collapses, a murmur of voices and laughter is heard outside in the hall. Brissac catches her in his arms and lays her on the bed.*)

DENYS. They're coming to the *petit levée.*

BRISSAC. Poor child . . . God help you!

(*Du Barry laughs hysterically.*)

DENYS (*To Sophie who rushes in*). Quick . . . Gather up the things. (*Sophie straightens the bed and picks up the flowers.*) Madame, please.

DU BARRY (*Trying to choke back the sobbing laughter*). Huh! Huh!

DENYS (*To Sophie*). Call Henriette and Picar. Make haste. (*Sophie pulls down the curtains and opens the door for the lackeys who enter bearing candles. The voices grow louder outside.*)

SOPHIE. Madame, they are waiting.

(*She hands Du Barry a mirror and a powder-puff.*)

DU BARRY. How can I . . . how can I see them? (*Still sobbing.*) Huh! Huh!

DENYS (*To Du Barry*). But, Madame, they only come for a moment.

DU BARRY (*Choking back an hysterical outburst*). Huh!

SOPHIE (*Assisting at the toilet*). Perhaps Madame will say "Huh" to-day? Yesterday Madame lisped.

DU BARRY. Yeth! But I won't want to lisp to-day. (*In tears.*) Huh! (*Lisping.*) Do I look nice, Sophie?

SOPHIE. Yes, Madame.

DU BARRY. Is my lisp right, Denys? (*Cries.*) Huh!

DENYS. Don't cry. They'd be pleased to see you in tears — the serpents.

(*Sophie and Denys bring in fresh pillows and arrange the bed, as Du Barry still crying tries to hold up the mirror and use the powder-puff.*)

BRISSAC. Madame, allow me.

(*With one knee on the step to the bed, he holds up the mirror and powder-box. Du Barry powders her face — still holding back the sobs.*)

DENYS (*Giving Du Barry a bunch of violets*). Shh! Madame . . . Now! (*Denys opens the door with a deep bow. A line of liveried servants is seen in the antechamber. Music of harps and flutes is heard. Denys announces.*) Madame la Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

(*The Duchesse d'Aiguillon, very stately, in an enormous hoop, enters and bows to Du Barry.*)

DU BARRY (*Choking back a sob*). Huh!

DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON. Madame la Comtesse.

DU BARRY (*Mechanically returning the salutation*). Huh!

(*Each time Du Barry says "Huh", the Duchesse starts back in surprise — she kisses Du Barry's hand.*)

DENYS. Madame la Marquise de Crenay.

(*The Marquise enters, bows very low.*)

DU BARRY. Huh!

MARQUISE (*Lisping*). May the Marquise de Crenay wish her charming, exquisite Madame la Comtesse a very good-morning?

(*Kisses Du Barry on both cheeks.*)

DU BARRY. Huh! Huh! (*Brissac kisses Du Barry's hand as though he were one of the throng.*) Ah, Monsieur le Duc. Huh! . . . Huh!

(*Brissac retreats — bows to the ladies and goes off.*)

DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON (*Lisping*). How is our fascinatingly bewitching friend to-day?

DU BARRY (*Drawing a convulsive breath*). Huh!

MARQUISE DE CRENAY. Yes, how is she to-day?

DU BARRY. Huh!

DENYS. In excellent spirits, Madame la Duchesse.

(*They all sit down. Lackeys pass cups of chocolate.*)

DU BARRY (*Bowing mechanically — with an unmeaning smile*). Huh! Huh!

MARQUISE (*Sipping chocolate — to Duchesse. The women no longer lisp*). Huh! What's that?

DU BARRY (*Sipping chocolate*). Huh!

MARQUISE. Huh? What is she doing? She is not lisping to-day.

DU BARRY. Huh!

DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON. Huh! 'Tis a new fashion!

DU BARRY. Huh! Huh!

MARQUISE (*To Du Barry*). Huh! Huh! We rejoice to hear it, Madame la Comtesse. Huh! Huh!

DU BARRY (*To Denys*). They're mimicking me.

(*Notices that Zamore is sitting by her bed and seizes his turban to throw at them.*)

DENYS (*Aside to Du Barry*). Sh. . . . You've made it the fashion.

(*Hands Du Barry a cup of chocolate.*)

DU BARRY (*Resolving to see if she really has set a fashion*). Huh!

MARQUISE. Huh!

DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON. Huh!

ALL. Huh! (*A voice is heard outside announcing.*) Madame la Dauphine.

(*Enter Marie Antoinette, aged sixteen.*)

DU BARRY (*To Denys*). These aristocrats who called me a red-head — they shall see something to-day.

MARQUISE. Marie Antoinette here!

(*All rise and bow to the Princess as she enters with her escort — she is very haughty in manner.*)

DAUPHINE (*Her hand on her heart — coldly*). Madame la Comtesse.

DU BARRY (*Coldly*). Madame la Dauphine.

MARQUISE (*Aside to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon*). She can be a great lady as well as the rest of us — that milliner.

(*Lackeys place a chair for Marie Antoinette and hand her flowers and a cup of chocolate.*)

DENYS. Monsieur le Duc de Richelieu.

RICHELIEU (*Appearing*). Ah, Madame la Dauphine. (*To Du Barry.*) Ah, may your humble Richelieu bid you good-morning, Madame la Comtesse?

(*Bows to others as he comes forward and kneels abjectly at Du Barry's feet. She gives him the top of her fan to kiss. He kisses it, somewhat annoyed.*)

VOICE (*Outside — announcing*). His Eminence, Monseigneur, the Papal Nuncio.

(*All rise.*)

DU BARRY. Zamore, hold this.

(*Hands him the red cover which he stretches out in front of the bed. Denys back of the bed holds the bed-cover up as she rises. She points to her slippers with her foot — they are under the night table.*)

MARQUISE (*To others*). In a bed-cover! She receives the Nuncio in a counterpane.

(*Marie Antoinette rises. Richelieu drops on his knees, reaching under the night table for the slippers. The Nuncio enters. All bow. He bows to Marie Antoinette who passes out.*)

DU BARRY (*Wiggling her toes*). Where are my —

RICHELIEU. Your slippers . . . your slippers . . . Permit me, Madame.

DU BARRY. Monseigneur . . . (*She bows. He bows to her. He carries a large bunch of grapes. Richelieu is reaching for the slippers, not seeing the entrance of the Nuncio. Du Barry kicks Richelieu gently.*) The Nuncio . . . His Eminence . . . Pst!

(*Richelieu scrambles to his feet, the slippers behind his back, and bows; then sets down the slippers and retreats.*)

RICHELIEU. Monseigneur.

NUNCIO (*Offering the grapes to Du Barry*). Madame la Comtesse, a bunch of grapes, fresh this morning from my own country. 'Tis said in my province: "If two eat of the same bunch, 'tis a pledge of friendship."

(*Nuncio and Du Barry eat the grapes as she wiggles her toes to find her slippers.*)

DU BARRY. Ah, Monseigneur, ever since the day you came to Labille's —

NUNCIO. Ever since the milliner shop — yes, Madame. Permit me. (*Kneeling, he puts on the slippers and picks up the bunch of violets which she has dropped.*) Ah, Madame, Parma violets, are they not? (*In a low voice after holding up his hand to request the others to retire out of hearing.*) I thank Madame for her many favors which have enabled me to battle with the enemies of the Holy Church. . . . Look at Richelieu!

(*Richelieu and the Statesmen are concocting a plot in a corner.*)

DU BARRY. Ask what you will, Monseigneur. I will do everything that is possible to aid you — and if it be impossible — I'll do it.

(*Both laugh.*)

NUNCIO. I shall ever hope for my daughter, Jeanette —

DU BARRY. — the sinner —

NUNCIO. — until I receive into our fold, Jeanette the saint.

DU BARRY. Ah, Monseigneur, the man I told you of — the one man — could have made me one of the Saints of Heaven! But now —

(*She kneels — he raises his hand over her.*)

NUNCIO. God bless you, my girl. (*Aloud.*) Madame la Comtesse.

DU BARRY. Monseigneur.

(*The Papal Nuncio passes out, all bowing.*)

(*Du Barry rises, leaning on Zamore, and gets into bed. During this, a voice in the distance is heard announcing.*)

VOICE. Monsieur le Chancelier de Maupeou.

MARQUISE (*To Du Barry*). Until we meet in the gardens to-night.

(*She and the Duchesse go up, standing in line by the door as the courtiers pass.*)

VOICE (*Nearer — announcing*). Monsieur le Chancelier de Maupeou.

VOICE OUTSIDE (*As Maupeou makes his first bow*). Monsieur l'Abbé Terray.

MAUPEOU (*Entering and kneeling by the bed*). Madame la Comtesse.

(*He kisses her hand.*)

VOICE (*Outside — nearer*). Monsieur l'Abbé Terray.

TERRAY (*Entering and kneeling by the bed*). Madame la Comtesse.

RICHELIEU (*Kneeling*). Madame la Comtesse, you are charming to-day.

MARQUISE (*Aside to the lady sitting next her*). The three greatest men in France kneeling to that woman — and she made my hats! Huh! Huh!

(*The Marquise and the Duchesse bow and hasten off.*)

DENYS. Will Madame see anyone else to-day?

DU BARRY. I'll see no one else this morning. Put out the lights. (*Seeing that Richelieu, Maupeou and Terray linger.*) Well, gentlemen?

(*Lackeys put out the candles. Daylight comes in again. Du Barry is now sitting cross-legged like a Turk, throwing bonbons to Zamore, who catches them in his mouth.*)

RICHELIEU (*Aside*). Bribe her well, Terray. The spendthrift! We must have her favor with the King this morning, to fill Choiseul's place.

DU BARRY. Well, gentlemen?

RICHELIEU. The Minister of Finance desires a word with Madame la Comtesse.

TERRAY (*Setting a money coffer on the table*). Two hundred thousand louis for Madame's purse for the month . . . and if Madame needs more —

MAUPEOU. For trinkets —

RICHELIEU. Terray shall pay. I hope you are in most excellent humor this morning, dearest lady.

DU BARRY. Yes, yes, my dearest Richelieu, I'm bubbling over with joy. How would *you* like to be called a courtesan?

RICHELIEU. Madame!

DU BARRY (*To Terray, who stands with his hand on the money-*

box). How much money have I squandered since I came here?

TERRAY. Oh . . . er . . . ten million louis.

DU BARRY. Dear me! And where did you get it, eh?

TERRAY. Oh, easily.

MAUPEOU (*Aside to Richelieu*). Get his Majesty's signature.

RICHELIEU (*Taking a paper from Maupeou*). If Madame will beg his Majesty to sign this . . .

(*He kneels. Du Barry seizes the paper which he has opened and crushes it in her hand; she rises to her knees in bed.*)

DU BARRY. You're a nice band of brigands, aren't you? —

ALL. Madame la Comtesse!

DU BARRY. — to be here fawning at my feet like flunkeys!

ALL. Madame!

DU BARRY (*Jumps up in bed*). Fawning upon me — riff-raff! (*To Richelieu.*) You called me that — riff-raff brought here by you to hop when you pull a string.

ALL (*Murmuring softly*). Madame!

DU BARRY. And for what? To wheedle a King; to be your go-between for his royal favors. Shame upon you — (*hurls a pillow at Richelieu*) shame! (*Terray picks up the pillow as Du Barry hops off the bed.*) You, the first gentlemen of France, to tolerate such a low thing as this *pacte de famine!* It is infamous. The people are starving, the children crying for bread, while I squander money right and left. It is infamous. (*Pushing the casket towards them.*) Take this money — take it back — I don't want it — I won't have it. 'Tis blood-money. Ah, Messieurs, you'll find me changed. I have been your puppet long enough. Now your turn has come — and Taratata — I'll make you hop, hop, hop, and sky-high, too!

(*Jean du Barry has entered during this, drunk as usual.*)

JEAN. Wait! I have something to say about that. I lost ten thousand louis at cards last night, gentlemen.

DU BARRY. Not one more sou.

JEAN. I set you upon a throne, you low-bred milliner, you —

DU BARRY. Not one more sou.

JEAN. I'll have my pay.

DU BARRY. Not one more sou.

JEAN. Jarni! You shall be turned from the Palace gates, you little —

DU BARRY. And if I am? . . . You are dismissed.

JEAN. Madame la Comtesse.

DU BARRY. Monsieur le Comte.

(*Jean leaves the room.*)

TERRAY. Madame —

DU BARRY. Enough.

RICHELIEU. But —

DU BARRY. Enough.

RICHELIEU. Oh!
TERRAY. But —
MAUPEOU. Madame, if —
(*All speaking at the same time.*)

DU BARRY. Silence, if you please.

(*The King suddenly appears, having entered through a secret door.*)

ALL. Your Majesty.

KING (*Looking at Du Barry who, in her excitement, has thrown off her formal negligée*). Madame, this toilet!

DU BARRY (*Picking up her night-dress, dancing as she hums "Amaryllis"*). Ha, ha, ha! Don't put on airs before me, Louis Capet.

KING (*Throwing a kiss — laughing*). Her very impudence enchants me.

(*All laugh and retire.*)

ALL. Sire . . . Your Majesty.

RICHELIEU (*Apart*). That woman must go. (*To the King.*) Sire . . . Your Majesty.

(*He disappears, following the others.*)

KING (*Dropping on his knees on the hearth — blowing the fire with the bellows*). Ah, I'm cold. I dread another melancholy seizure. (*Du Barry, coming out from behind the screen, hits him on the back with her slipper. He turns, laughing — sits on the hearth, putting on her slipper.*) Treason! You struck your King. Your punishment shall be — let me see . . . a thousand kisses, shall we say?

DU BARRY (*Hops over his legs and takes the bellows*). Oh, let me do it.

(*Sits on the low ottoman and blows the fire.*)

KING. Ah, Mignonne, is there any wish of yours I have not gratified?

DU BARRY. Yes, yes, Sire.

KING. Ask it.

DU BARRY. Give me the little stars of heaven with silver strings to hang in my hair, your Majesty. Your hand, Louis, your hand. (*Kissing his hand.*) Good-morning, Sire.

KING (*Rises — sits in the arm-chair*). Yes, yes, my little dear, you shall have the stars.

DU BARRY. When shall I have the stars?

KING Ah, you witch. (*Impulsively drawing her down to him.*) Jeanette, I love you. You intoxicate me . . . you delight me . . . you rule me. Jeanette, I love you; but I am jealous — very jealous. (*He kisses her shoulder. It is plain to be seen that she forces herself to submit to his caresses.*) Jeanette, there is no one else you love, is there?

DU BARRY. Oh no, of course not. Certainly not.

KING (*Tries to kiss her again*). Jeanette.

DU BARRY. That is enough before breakfast.

KING. I am jealous because I cannot forget that there was a man you loved. I'm jealous — jealous.

(*He strikes the table with his clenched fist.*)

DU BARRY. Oh, sit down.

KING. What are you doing?

DU BARRY. Powdering my nose. Are you going to begin again? (*She finds the picture of Cossé and looks for a place to hide it.*) God deliver me from a jealous man — always quarreling — and over nothing.

KING. What's that?

DU BARRY. What?

(*Showing empty hands.*)

KING. Oh . . . I thought — never mind.

DU BARRY (*Imitating him*). Oh . . . I thought — never

mind. (*She picks up the portrait and hides it in her powder-box.*) You are very suspicious.

KING (*Stirring the fire savagely*). What devil in hell makes this fire so cold? (*Sitting in the arm-chair.*) Hah! 'Tis very curious . . . before I met you I ruled women; not because I was the King, but —

DU BARRY. Of course not. Certainly not.

KING. The women were mad over me. Why, two of them killed themselves for love of me.

DU BARRY (*Pouring out wine*). The fools! And yet, d'you know, Louis, there is really something very delightful about you — oh, delightful! (*The King looks pleased. Handing him the wine.*) Louis, I want to talk politics.

KING. What?

DU BARRY. Yes. Let us do away with the — the — er — well — the *pacte de famine.*

KING. What?

DU BARRY. Take some wine and you will feel better.

KING (*Setting down the glass in anger*). What? Fatten those dogs who have formed a league against me to bring about a revolution?

DU BARRY. Louis, you are not always advised for the best. You are surrounded by a lot of villains — now, there's me, for instance . . . But this time, I beg of you to do something good. Let us do away with this *pacte de famine.*

KING. No, no, I will not. I want their leader. I've set spies on him. They are searching Paris for him. He is the head of this league — and when I find him — well, I want that head.

DU BARRY. Heads! Heads! Heads again! There you go. Where's my hat and parasol? I'm off for Flanders in a post-chaise.

(*Gets her hat out of a hat-box, picks up a parasol and starts for the door.*)

KING. Jeanette! Jeanette! . . . Wait, my dear, wait.

DU BARRY. Well, will you let me have my way? I'll go if you do not . . . Say yes.

KING. . . . Er . . .

DU BARRY. Well?

KING. . . . Er . . . I . . .

DU BARRY. Well, I'll go.

KING (*Reluctantly*). Yes.

DU BARRY. Ah, my France, my France, my France, you are a sweet country. (*Kneeling, she kisses his hand.*) You are adorable when you are not jealous.

DENYS (*Entering*). Your Majesty, Monsieur le Duc de Brissac craves an audience upon a most urgent matter.

DU BARRY. Admit him.

(*Brissac enters.*)

KING. Ah! Have you news for me?

BRISSAC. I did not know until now, Your Majesty, that the leader we are looking for is —

KING. Well — well?

BRISSAC. Is my son.

(*Du Barry drops the hat-box which she has been holding.*)

KING. Cossé, eh? (*Enraged, he darts a look at Du Barry.*) Ah! (*To Brissac.*) My friend, you have always served me well: you know your duty. I want your son.

BRISSAC (*Rising*). Sire . . .

(*He leaves the room.*)

KING. Now I know why you side with my enemies . . . 'tis because of this Cossé. He was your lover.

DU BARRY. I do not know him.

KING. Jean du Barry told me.

DU BARRY. Oh, Jean du Barry told you. So you pay him to spy on me — this charming brother-in-law of mine — this creature who takes my money and rakes the ashes of my life over and over and over for your benefit. And you believe him! Oh, la, la!

KING. I knew it the first day I met you . . . you said you loved a young man; I took good care to find out his name.

DU BARRY. Oh yes, Jean du Barry again. How much did you pay him, Louis?

KING. 'Twas for that I threw this Cossé out of my Guard — banished him to *Isles Sainte Marguerite.*

DU BARRY. Oh, that's where he's been. That is why I have not seen him.

KING. You have looked for him, have you? He has escaped from prison where I sent him to rot.

DU BARRY. You did that? You took an innocent man and banished him to that horrible hole — you did that on the word of Jean du Barry?

KING (*Savagely*). You love him.

DU BARRY. I hate you.

KING. And he comes back as a leader of these —

DU BARRY (*Beating him with her fan*). I hate you, you miserable King, you.

KING (*Rising — starting for door*). But he never shall head any more rebellions — I'll see to that.

DU BARRY. I hate you.

KING. I shall see to that.

(*He goes.*)

DU BARRY (*Running to the door — calling after the King*). I hate you — I hate you . . . Oh, oh, Cossé, my poor Cossé! So that's where you — (*A shot is heard outside — and in a moment, another shot. A slight pause. Cossé enters by the window, badly wounded.*) Cossé . . . (*Another shot is heard.*) Come away . . . come away from the window . . . they can see you! (*She draws him in. Cossé staggers into the room, barely able to stand.*) Oh, why have you come here?

COSSÉ. The King . . . I saw him a moment ago . . . there . . . by the window . . . but they watched me from below . . . now he has gone. (*Du Barry locks the doors, goes to the window and peers out, then pulls the curtains.*) I am too late.

DU BARRY (*Seeing his blood-stained handkerchief*). You are hurt. Cossé . . .

COSSÉ. You — (*Pushing her hand away.*) This is how it ends between us . . . It must please you, since your King sent me to Ste. Marguerite, to see me here — hunted like a — (*He drops into a chair, his face livid.*)

DU BARRY. Ah, no, no, no, no . . . Cossé, let me help you.

COSSÉ. Day and night I lay in that hole —

DU BARRY. You kill me . . . I never knew . . . I never knew where you were.

COSSÉ. I saw you two here together.

DU BARRY. I never knew.

COSSÉ. D'you think I care for the *pacte de famine?* No, 'tis you — you I —

DU BARRY (*Calling in a low voice*). Denys, are you there? (*Getting no answer, she turns to Cossé.*)

COSSÉ. I want the man that took you away from me.

DU BARRY. Ah!

COSSÉ. That's why they made me their leader — because I hated him. They wanted his life and that's why I came here gladly, — to kill him.

DU BARRY. Cossé, did you come here for that?

COSSÉ. I came here to kill your lover. It was not the King I came to kill, but your lover. Oh, Jeanette, Jeanette . . . (*He sinks back in tears and pain.*)

DU BARRY. Cossé, Cossé dear, you break my heart . . . May I come near you — touch you? O my love — my love . . . (*She sinks at his feet — her face on his knees.*) I told you . . . I told you nothing ever lasted with me. I'm always pushed on, on, and away from the things I love . . . But you were wrong that day in La Gourdan's house. You were cruel . . . you hurt me . . . you left me — went away without me — and then I did not care. I came here to torment you; to make you feel that you had lost me; but I've suffered for it, for I wanted you — only you. I've longed for you . . . and oh! how I have hated it here. (*A roll of drums sounds below.*) There . . . They're under the windows . . . Denys? Where are you? Denys? . . . They're coming! I can hear them. They think you are in this room. Sh. . . . (*A knock sounds on the door.*) They dare not come in unless I bid them . . . Only the King —

COSSÉ. Ah!

DU BARRY. Quiet . . . Quiet . . . (*A knock sounds on the*

door used by the King. She has covered Cossé's mouth with her hand. More knocking is heard.) The King's door . . . (*Cossé tries to rise.*) No, Cossé, no. (*Holding him back savagely.*) 'Tis useless — the King is guarded . . . They would tear you to pieces! Be quiet. Be quiet . . . Oh, I must help you to get away. Cossé, let me go with you. You must see that I adore you; that I live and breathe for you; I'm dead with love of you — dead with it.

COSSÉ (*For a second forgetting himself, takes her in his arms*). Jeanette —

(*There is another knock on the King's door.*)

DU BARRY. There he is. Do not speak.

KING'S VOICE. Madame . . .

DU BARRY. The King.

COSSÉ. Ah!

(*Throwing her aside, he rises, drawing his sword.*)

DU BARRY (*Quickly barring his way. She strikes him violently with both hands. Already wounded and weak, he falls backwards on the bed, unconscious. She puts her hand over his mouth. The King knocks again*). Yes? (*Sleepily.*) Yes? Yes, what is it? (*To Cossé.*) Cossé, have I hurt you? Have I hurt you?

KING'S VOICE. Why is this door locked? (*Angrily.*) Open, Madame, open.

DU BARRY. Oh, can I never have a moment's peace? (*The King knocks again. She pulls down the blinds. The room is in darkness.*) What is it?

KING (*Knocking louder*). Let me in, Madame. (*He tries the door.*) Let me in, or I'll —

DU BARRY. Oh! You have come back, have you? — and in a temper. You go out in a rage, and back you come — no getting rid of you . . . Taratata! (*The King turns the knob angrily. As she covers Cossé with the coverlid used for the petit levée.*) He's dying . . . (*Calls out.*) You'll come in when I let you and not before.

KING (*Furiously*). Open, I tell you. I command you to open the door.

DU BARRY. Command! Ha! So France is at the door. (*She sees the spot of blood on the floor — wiping it up with her handkerchief as she speaks.*) Not to that voice — I'll not open the door, not to that voice.

KING (*A little softer*). Then please open, Madame.

DU BARRY. Ah, that's better. That's the way to speak to me. We must not forget our manners. (*Throwing the blood-stained handkerchief under the rug.*) Now . . . (*She rushes to the bolt, draws it, and tumbles into bed just as the King enters, followed by two men attendants. They open other doors and look everywhere.*) What is it now?

(*Jean du Barry enters, one of the King's attendants with him.*)

KING (*To Jean du Barry*). Are you sure he entered this room?

JEAN. I am certain, Sire.

KING. Look there.

(*An attendant goes to the balcony.*)

DU BARRY (*Rising in bed*). What is this?

JEAN. He was on that balcony, Sire. I was leaving the Palace, dismissed by Madame, when by chance I saw him there. (*Pointing.*) The bullet struck there, Sire.

DU BARRY (*The light comes in from the window, falling in a long, single ray on the bed. She draws her hand over her eyes*). Pull that blind down . . . pull it down . . . the light dazzles me . . . I cannot see.

(*Jean pulls down the blinds and the attendant re-enters.*)

KING. Call everyone. They can track him from here.

(*The room is presently overrun by the King's spies.*)

DU BARRY. Since when does the King of France humiliate me before his menials? Order these men out.

KING (*Frowning, hesitates; then makes a slight gesture and all leave the room*). Well?

DU BARRY. Well?

KING. I know that a man came into this room. I know where he is. I could hand him over to the police . . . but I want you to confess to me.

DU BARRY. I do not know where he is.

KING. I will pardon you.

DU BARRY. I do not know where he is.

KING. I will release him.

DU BARRY. I do not know where he is.

KING (*In a rage*). I tell you —

DU BARRY. Are you going to begin again? One would think to hear you talk — talk — talk — that every man in France was my lover. Look for yourself. Look under the tables — under the chairs — Look into the powder-box. Look in the bed.

KING. Yes, but I —

DU BARRY. Good heavens! A man is seen on my balcony . . . God knows how many windows open on that balcony . . . and yet you must choose me as a victim. You must come here to make a fool of yourself — a fool of me. You must drag in your spies, your lackeys, your Jean du Barrys — rend the air accusing me as if I were the only woman in the Palace. If a man is within a mile of this room, he must come to see me, of course. Taratata! Tara —

KING. But still I insist —

DU BARRY. There is one thing I must and will have: I will have peace if I am to be Folly in the fête in the Garden to-night. Look for this man yourself. Hunt him — get him — take him, but don't bother me.

KING. If he —

DU BARRY. I do not care where he is — I do not care what you do. I want a moment's peace and I'm going to have it or I'll run off to God knows where! Go, go, get out of here or I'll scream! I've had enough of you to-day . . . Enough of you to-day . . . enough of you . . . Enough of you . . . Enough . . .

KING (*At the door — enraged*). I'll go, but —

DU BARRY. I've had enough, enough, enough! Go, go, or I'll scream! I'll scream — I'll scream! I'll — (*The King goes off — trembling with rage. As the door closes, Du Barry jumps up, tears off the bed-clothes*). Cossé . . . Cossé . . . Cossé . . . Oh! (*Jean du Barry has noiselessly appeared and*

stealthily comes to the foot of the bed. She instinctively turns and sees him.) . . . How much?

JEAN. Two hundred thousand louis.

DU BARRY (*Pushing the box on the table towards Jean*). Take it.

CURTAIN

ACT IV

In the Royal Gardens, before the dawn of the following morning.

"Folly, Queen of France."

The King, Du Barry, and the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, are eating and drinking (*unseen*) *in a pavilion. The curtains enclosing the pavilion are drawn; but a stream of light shines out into the shadowy gardens. An awning of tapestry is fastened to the trees.*

Mingling with laughter in the pavilion, cries of "Pacte de famine" are heard outside the gates to remind His Most Christian Majesty that while he feasts others starve.

In the background, lights twinkle in the Palace.

The curtain rises to a wild dash of bacchanalian music.

Monsieur de Renard, a sentinel, is on duty. Scalo, a big Nubian, is scattering scarlet flowers here and there.

Drums are heard and the King's Guard enters.

LEBEL (*Entering from the pavilion*). Monsieur de Renard?

RENARD. Monsieur Lebel?

LEBEL. The sounds outside the Palace gate annoy His Majesty. This cry of "*Pacte de famine*" must be stopped.

RENARD. The Guard will quiet the people.

VOICES (*Outside, as popping of corks and laughter sound from the pavilion*). *Pacte de famine!*

(*The monastery clock strikes four as the Nuncio enters in a long dark cloak, his red robe showing under it, leaning on an attendant who carries a lantern.*)

LEBEL. Monseigneur.

NUNCIO. My good Lebel, His Majesty must be making merry at the banquet to-night.

LEBEL. Alas, Monseigneur, no. His Majesty sits there, silent and morose. This mood has lasted since morning. He and Madame . . . Oh, a terrible scene!

NUNCIO (*Checks Lebel who retires. Denys appears*). Denys, I am here at the request of Madame la Comtesse.

DENYS. Madame is afraid to leave the King. She wishes to recall to His Eminence his pledge of friendship of the morning. Madame begs a favor.

NUNCIO. Ask it.

DENYS. The shelter of the Monastery for the young man she has so often spoken of to the Monseigneur.

NUNCIO. Has he returned?

DENYS. Wounded . . . unconscious . . . hidden in Madame's bedroom.

NUNCIO. In Madame's bedroom?

DENYS. They are looking for him now. He was seen on Madame's balcony.

NUNCIO. Ah!

DENYS. Madame waited until this hour that all might be quiet in the Palace.

(*As the Duc de Brissac enters, he is saluted by the sentries on duty.*)

BRISSAC. Monseigneur. (*The Nuncio blesses him.*) Pardon my surprise at seeing you here, — but at this hour . . .

NUNCIO. A little errand of mercy. (*Cries of "Pacte de famine" are heard.*) An uprising among the people is spreading fast.

BRISSAC. Two of the Guard deserted to them. Yesterday I would have felt the shame of it bitterly; but now, Monseigneur, I find my loyalty tested. I am searching for my son, Cossé . . . in hiding . . . the first of our name to . . . (*Collecting himself.*) I forgot myself. "God and the King!" — that is the motto of our house. Right or wrong we serve the King.

NUNCIO. Do your duty, Monsieur le Duc. A soldier's duty is to serve; mine as a Priest is to console.

(*He passes off with an attendant, followed by Denys.*)

GENDARME (*Entering*). We have finished searching the

Gardens and the Palace. He is not there. (*Looking off.*) They are coming with some one now.

(*A sullen roar has been heard at the gates as four gendarmes run on with a prisoner — Valroy, wearing a peasant's clothing, but showing the King's Guard uniform underneath.*)

BRISSAC. Valroy . . . you?

A GUARDSMAN. We took him by the gates, inciting the people.

BRISSAC. You, the youngest man in the Guard. Shame!

VALROY. No, Monsieur le Duc, I am not ashamed. I am right.

BRISSAC. Silence!

VALROY. You may silence me, Monsieur le Duc, but you cannot silence the truth. One day France will rise up against her King.

(*Maupeou and Richelieu come from the pavilion to find out what is causing the excitement.*)

KING'S VOICE (*From the pavilion*). Maupeou! Maupeou!

RICHELIEU. What is the meaning of this?

KING (*Appearing on a balcony near the pavilion*). Maupeou!

BRISSAC. His Majesty.

(*Valroy is put against the wall — in the shadow. They silence him by covering his mouth.*)

KING. How dare the people disturb my pleasure! (*Cries of "Pacte de famine" outside.*) What is that?

MAUPEOU. 'Tis only a passing cry — 'tis nothing, Sire.

KING. 'Tis what I hear. Answer me. Why are they storming the gates?

BRISSAC. One of Your Majesty's Guard deserted to the people — he is just taken.

KING (*Pleased*). Ah! Very good . . . And are you as zealous in all directions?

BRISSAC. I have ordered de Sartines to guard every road from Versailles. My son Cossé shall not escape, Sire.

KING. Ah!

(*He goes back to the pleasures of the table.*)

BRISSAC. To the guard-house with Valroy.

(*Valroy is taken off, Brissac following.*)

RICHELIEU. God help Cossé, if His Majesty —

MAUPEOU. Yes, God help him — and her.

RICHELIEU. She will make us hop, eh? God above us, what a day! There's not a scullery maid in the Palace but munches over the scandal.

VOICE (*Off*). Way for the dancers from the Opera.

ANOTHER VOICE. Way for the dancers from the Opera.

(*Soldiers escort on some dancers, cloaked and hooded.*)

RICHELIEU. Ah! La Belle Grand. Throw me a kiss with that toe of yours.

LE GRAND (*Kicking*). One, two, three, four, five kisses, Monsieur le Duc.

(*As the dancers enter the pavilion, they are greeted with applause and shouts.*)

VOICES (*Off — louder*). *Pacte de famine.*

MAUPEOU. I do not like those cries so near the Palace gates. They rise above the ballet music. His Majesty will be enraged.

(*Jean du Barry is heard singing drunkenly as he approaches.*)

RICHELIEU. Jean du Barry! He dares to come here drunk —

(*Jean enters, arm-in-arm with two seedy-looking roysterers.*)

RENARD. Monsieur le Comte, who are these —

JEAN. My friend, Chevalier de la —

CHEVALIER. — de la Garde.

JEAN. My other friend, Marquis — er —

MARQUIS. — de Fontenelle.

(*Renard retires.*)

JEAN (*Bringing the men down*). I had to give you titles, you vagabonds, or he would have kicked you out. (*Seeing Richelieu.*) Ah! Monsieur le Maréchal, plotting as usual? (*To Maupeou.*) Old powder and patches here, too, eh?

RICHELIEU. The insolent —

JEAN. You see, Messieurs? (*Taking a handful of gold from his pocket.*) My dear sister-in-law changed her mind . . . I am still in the game with you. I have just gambled away a fortune to these gentlemen I met in a wine-shop. Oh, I am in high favor.

BRISSAC (*Re-entering*). Monsieur du Barry, His Majesty orders you from the Court.

JEAN. Orders me . . . Oh . . . the fate of all who work upon the King's jealousy, eh? No, Monsieur le Duc, I shall not go.

BRISSAC. You remain at your peril.

(*He goes to the gates.*)

JEAN. Monsieur le Duc, I'll gamble on that — any stakes you like — I shall not go. (*To Richelieu and Maupeou, who are listening.*) I hold a card that will crush my sweet sister-in-law.

(*Staggers and nearly falls.*)

RICHELIEU (*Assisting him*). Allow me.

MAUPEOU. Allow me.

RICHELIEU. If you hold a card, play it, Jean du Barry. This Queen of France has made us hop, and you, too!

MAUPEOU. We'll get nothing more from her.

RICHELIEU. Now is the time — while the King's rage is still warm.

MAUPEOU. He is mad with jealousy.

JEAN. You may go to the devil — you two. I'll play this game alone.

WOMEN'S VOICES (*Inside the pavilion*). Richelieu? Where is Richelieu?

RICHELIEU. Coming, my charmers, coming.

MAUPEOU. Think it over, Jean du Barry.

JEAN (*Who has taken a pack of cards from his pocket and now cuts*). The Queen of Hearts . . . I see you, Jeanette Vaubernier . . . And I see my pockets empty if you drive me away.

RICHELIEU. Think it over.

(*He and Maupeou go back to the pavilion.*)

JEAN. Come here, you fellows. (*The roysterers approach.*) I am going to toss a coin. 'Twill be the favor of a King or the hazard of a woman. (*He tosses a coin.*) The jade. I made her . . . and I must unmake her. (*He picks up the coin.*) Jarni!

(*Pirouettes, takes the arms of the roysterers and goes off singing drunkenly.*)

(*The dance music is faster, louder, and comes to an end amid cries of "Bravo! Bravo!"*)

(*Brissac has entered and stands immovable. The King's Guard is stationed out of sight. Lackeys have carried on banquet tables and candles. Four Nubians dash down with lighted torches with sharp ends which they stick into the ground. Pages draw the curtains open and the King appears, escorting Du Barry.*)

DU BARRY (*As the moonlight falls across their path*). Look, Your Majesty . . . The moon comes to kiss you. (*They are followed by Maupeou, Terray, Richelieu, D'Aiguillon, Marquise de Crenay, Duchesse d'Aiguillon, Princess de Navarre, and other guests. Scalo steps forward and kneels, holding up a gong of gold, and a stick to strike it.*) Look, Sire. Here is a pretty trick: one, two, three — crack!

(*She strikes the gong. A fountain opens and sends up a spray of water. Two Cupids appear, throwing flowers. The King looks on as though bored to extinction.*)

A CLOWN (*Heard off*). Hola! Hola! Hola!

(*He runs on, kneels at Du Barry's feet, offering a fool's stick.*)

DU BARRY (*Shaking the stick to make the bells ring*). Now, let Folly be the fashion of the night.

RICHELIEU. Brava! Brava! We'll kill time and sorrow with a shuttlecock!

(*He pirouettes, nearly falling, but is saved by two women.*)

DU BARRY (*To Scalo in a low voice*). I must speak with the Duc de Brissac. The Nuncio . . . Is he here? Have you a message? (*Scalo retires and is seen to speak to the Duc de Brissac.*) Here we are — (*Taking each Cupid by the hand*) love, frolic — (*Taking the fool's cap from the clown and clapping it on her head*) and a fool — all for your pleasure, Sire. (*All three bow.*) Command us.

(*Two Cupids seize the King's hands and lead him to the throne where they presently sit at his feet.*)

KING (*Holding out his hand to Du Barry*). Madame la Comtesse . . . Homage to our Queen of the Night.

MARQUISE DE CRENAY. Nay, Sire, let me call her Queen of our Hearts.

RICHELIEU (*To Maupeou*). Ah! D'Aiguillon kneels at her feet . . . the new Prime Minister appointed at her request.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (*Sings to the harp*).

"The night hath stars to light the skies,
But Louis' Court hath thy sweet eyes . . .
Hath thy star eyes,
Jeanette!"

PRINCESSE ALIXE. Madame la Comtesse, you are beautiful to-night.

DU BARRY. Madame la Princesse, I thank you.

RICHELIEU (*To Maupeou*). A Prime Minister and a Princess at her feet. A great night for the milliner, eh?

(*The ladies pass Du Barry and form groups. Du Barry manages to escape and meets de Brissac.*)

DU BARRY. Help me, help me. Your son is wounded — dying.

BRISSAC. Do not tempt me, Madame . . . remember I serve the King.

DU BARRY (*In despair*). Ah!

THE WOMAN'S VOICE.

"And love hath found thee fresh and fair . . .
Hath tangled Cupids in thy hair —
All in thy hair,
Jeanette!"

MARQUISE DE CRENAY (*Aside to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon*). That we should have to bow to that creature. (*They bow obsequiously.*) Still not a smile from His Majesty! She cannot coax him to-night.

MAUPEOU. He is in an ugly mood.

RICHELIEU. She went too far to-day. He's mad with jealousy of young De Cossé.

KING. Richelieu! I have excellent ears.

RICHELIEU. I . . . Sire . . . I only meant to say — I regretted that Your Majesty was . . . vexed to-day.

KING. Did you say "vexed" just now?

RICHELIEU. Pardon, Sire, 'tis only . . . what . . . I hear . . .

KING. And what do you hear?

RICHELIEU. Your Majesty, I dare not presume to —

KING. What — what — what?

RICHELIEU. To say that —

KING. Well?

RICHELIEU. I hear that young Cossé forced his way to —

KING. Forced?

RICHELIEU. Let us say — he came to the — er — room of — er —

KING. 'Tis not well for you, or others, to hear too much in my Court.

RICHELIEU. Sire.

(*He bows and turns away.*)

KING (*To Du Barry*). They are all gossiping. They know of this Cossé.

DU BARRY. The lights — take them away. Let us see the brandy flame. (*For a moment the stage is in darkness.*) A torch. (*She lights the brandy.*) Fill your glasses. Come, come, let us have no ceremony.

DENYS. Madame, look.

(*She turns, and in the light of the blue flames the Papal Nuncio stands, unseen by the others, waiting to speak to her.*)

DU BARRY (*Half whispering*). Monseigneur . . .

NUNCIO. The search in the gardens is over — the Palace is quiet. Act quickly. I have seen him. He is mad with delirium, raving against the King. Our Monastery at the gates is open to him. Make haste. Rest in peace, my child. (*The Nuncio disappears.*)

DU BARRY (*Taking a glass and dipping it into the bowl*). Now, to a smile from His Majesty, the King. (*All drink in silence. As Lebel fills a glass and hands it to the King.*) Denys, do not fail me. Go, go, take him away quickly.

(*Denys hastens off to the Palace.*)

Photo. Byron, N. Y.

Scene from **DU BARRY**

IN THE ROYAL GARDENS

Du Barry rushes up the throne steps, standing on a chair. The clowns leap after her, forming a grotesque group.

KING. To Madame la Comtesse.

ALL. Madame la Comtesse.

(*A dim moonlight floods the gardens. The guests are just discernible, bewildering and fantastic shadows in their quaint costumes.*)

DU BARRY (*Seizing the fool's stick*). Now, fiddles and folly under the moon, Your Majesty! (*A burst of elfin music and the dancers enter, doing a wild, bacchanalian dance. Clowns run on, bearing baskets on their backs, containing balls quartered in red, gold, orange, silver, green, gilt and blue, and hoops covered with skins.*) Ah, the games! The games!

RICHELIEU. The games! The games! (*Du Barry throws balls to the various guests who feign great interest in the childish pastime.*) Richelieu, Maupeou, Madame la Duchesse, catch. (*They catch the balls in the hoops. The clowns let a storm of balls fly in the air while women catch them and toss them to the men. The guests keep these balls moving. Clowns tumble and dancers caper about. Pandemonium reigns.*) Your Majesty, will you not play?

KING. No, no, I still have my doubts of —

DU BARRY. You must play, you must. Catch. There. (*The King ungraciously consents to countenance the farce for a moment.*) My clowns. (*They rush to her, grimacing and bowing.*) A reward if you make His Majesty smile. What is the most daring thing you can do? (*The clowns instantly attempt to kiss her.*) Oh, save me, save me! (*She rushes up the throne steps, standing on a chair. The clowns leap after her, forming a grotesque group. The games stop — the guests watch the undignified sport.*)

KING (*Smiling — suddenly amused*). Dieu, you vagabonds, do you dare?

RICHELIEU. Ah, His Majesty is melting.

MARQUISE DE CRENAY. She will win him back.

(*The Cupids pull the clowns down, aiming arrows at them. The clowns strike grotesque poses of fear and crawl away. The King laughs.*)

(*The music of the minuet begins. The guests dance.*)

KING (*Under the spell of the music and moonlight*). Still doubting you, you conquer me. Let us go. I want you, Jeanette, let us steal away.

DU BARRY. Louis . . .

KING. I am mad over you. Come.

(*In the distance the faint beating of a muffled drum is heard.*)

DU BARRY. What is that? Those drums are muffled.

KING. Who is that?

(*All stop dancing, the music continuing, giving the effect of a minuet with death lurking in the background.*)

BRISSAC. It was young Valroy, Sire.

KING. Let his body be thrown in the Place de Grève as a warning to those who oppose my will.

(*Brissac bows and retires. The dancers continue the minuet.*)

DU BARRY (*Half to herself*). I'm mad with wanting to know —

KING. What is it, my sweetheart?

DU BARRY. 'Tis nothing. I hate to see the dawn come . . . I wish the darkness would last . . .

DENYS (*Kneeling beside her chair*). We cannot take him away . . . He is in the Palace.

DU BARRY (*Under her breath*). You cannot? You cannot? You must.

DENYS. But Madame —

KING. Jeanette. (*She is forced to turn to him.*) I want you alone — in my arms. Let us go. I love you.

(*At this moment, a lady who has taken note of the King's mood, makes an eloquent gesture to the other dancers and, continuing the minuet, they leave the scene until at last all are gone. The dawn is breaking. A single torch burns brightly. A few candles are still flickering.*)

DU BARRY. You? You never loved a woman, Louis. 'Tis all vanity with you — I know your failing.

KING. I love you . . . I adore you.

DU BARRY. You never loved me.

KING. What is that? Why do you turn away?

DU BARRY. My slipper, Sire, my slipper. . . .

(*She edges nearer to Denys.*)

KING. Jeanette — forgive me for doubting you.

DENYS (*As she bends to fasten her slipper*). Jean du Barry has deserted you, Madame. He is waiting to give Monsieur de Cossé to the King.

KING. Jeanette!

DU BARRY. Get Cossé away — you must.

DENYS. I cannot. Jean du Barry has set two men to follow me.

DU BARRY. Oh!

KING. Jeanette, come to me — forgive me. Are you angry?

DU BARRY. No, no, no, no. I love you very much.

KING (*Drawing her to him*) I love you . . . I love you . . .

DU BARRY. Do you really love me, Louis?

KING. By my faith, I do.

DU BARRY. Prove it. Prove that you love me, Louis — prove it . . . A favor.

KING. Anything you ask, my little witch, anything.

(*Duc de Brissac enters as the lovers are about to kiss each other.*)

DU BARRY. They've been watching us all night. They think you are jealous — prove to them that you are not. There is one way to prove it — only one. Louis: do a sweet and gracious thing . . . pardon Monsieur de Cossé.

(*The Nuncio enters.*)

BRISSAC (*Appealingly*). Sire!

DU BARRY. Do this for a faithful servant — (*motioning to De Brissac to kneel*) a loyal friend. Pardon his son.

(*De Brissac kneeling, overcome, kisses her hand.*)

NUNCIO (*Appealingly*). Sire!

DU BARRY. Sire . . . Louis . . .

(*While the King is hesitating, Jean du Barry appears.*)

DENYS (*Warningly*). Look, Madame.

JEAN. Your Majesty.

KING. How dare you! I signified my wish that Monsieur du Barry should never appear before me again.

JEAN. I crave your pardon, Sire. I come to you with positive information of —

DU BARRY (*Laughing*). Ah, Sire, do not listen to that —

JEAN. Of Monsieur de Cossé —

DU BARRY. Ah, Sire, must he spoil our happy hour? Send him away. To-morrow is for other things — to-night is ours. Listen to the creature to-morrow.

KING. Monsieur de Cossé, eh?

JEAN. My life is the forfeit if I do not prove to Your —

DU BARRY. Stop! Send him away. Send him away. I have heard enough.

DENYS. Madame . . .

DU BARRY. He shall not speak. I will not listen. Send him away.

KING. Hm . . . So there is something to tell, eh? (*To Jean.*) Wait. So, Madame la Comtesse, your lover was with you to-day. You are silent . . . you are trembling . . . Answer me. I will have the truth.

DU BARRY. Well, have it then. Your friend Jean du Barry will tell you — and more besides. Good-night, Sire.

(*She starts to go, but pauses, watching Jean du Barry; Richelieu, Maupeou, the Marquise de Crenay and a few others enter, having finished the dance.*)

KING. Richelieu, a stroll about the gardens . . . (*To Brissac.*) Let this be private.

JEAN (*Aside to Du Barry*). I'll send you back to your millinery shop — you little —

RICHELIEU (*Offering his arm to the Marquise de Crenay as he goes*). Jean is going to play his trump card — young Cossé.

MARQUISE. Mark my word, she will win.

RICHELIEU. Oh, no. Look at that beautiful smile on Jean's face — (*imitating Jean du Barry.*) Taratata!

(*He passes off with his friend.*)

KING (*Seeing the Nuncio about to leave*). Monseigneur, remain. We Bourbons always end by turning to the Holy Church, when we have seen — (*gesturing towards Madame du Barry*) — our follies. I may have need of you.

(*At a gesture from the King, velvet hangings, put up to protect His Majesty in case of night winds, are dropped, forming a*

sort of tent, shutting out the gardens at the back. Denys kisses Madame du Barry's hand and retires.)

END OF THE FIRST SCENE

The Second Scene

Within the Tent.

The King, seated, motions the Nuncio to sit. Jean du Barry stands waiting. By this time he is sober.

KING. You told me this morning, Monsieur du Barry, that you saw this Cossé enter Madame's apartments.

JEAN (*Kneeling*). Yes, Sire, I saw him.

KING. Madame said he had not entered.

JEAN. If Madame will pardon me — I saw him, Sire.

KING. And yet, a few moments after I left her room, you said you were mistaken.

JEAN. My first impulse was to tell you, Sire; but then I remembered that Madame is my sister-in-law and —

KING. You shielded her?

JEAN. I tried to shield her.

KING. And now you have changed your mind again. Jean du Barry, you would sell your soul to the devil himself for gain. You may give me your information; remember this time you yourself have named the forfeit.

JEAN. Yes, Sire, my life — if I do not prove that Monsieur de Cossé is now —

DU BARRY. No, no, no, no: let me speak, Sire. I will tell you everything.

KING. Oh!

DU BARRY. Then at least 'twill be the truth.

KING. Hm! . . . Do you know where he is? Well . . . Shall he speak or —

DU BARRY. No.

KING. Then you do know where —

DU BARRY. No . . . I . . .

KING. You do not?

DU BARRY. Yes . . . no . . . yes . . . no . . . Oh, when you question me, I — I cannot think.

KING. So you cheated me?

DU BARRY. Yes, I did.

KING. You tricked me?

DU BARRY. Yes, but he was wounded — hurt . . . You were very angry . . . We had quarreled . . . I was afraid to tell you . . . (*The King is about to speak.*) But now I'll tell you everything . . . if you will be a little patient with me.

KING. With you and your lover, you mean?

DU BARRY. No, no, no, Sire. He was not my lover.

JEAN. Yes, Sire, yes.

DU BARRY. It's a lie — he knows it. Ah, Sire, he will say anything — he's a Gascon — a braggart. He even took money from me for his silence, and now he comes to you with the story.

JEAN. Your Majesty, every one knew there was an affair between them back in the days when she lived in the gambling rooms.

DU BARRY. That's a lie.

JEAN. 'Twas common talk.

DU BARRY. Oh! (*To Nuncio.*) Can you not speak to this man and force him to tell the truth?

KING. Monsieur du Barry, wait there. Monsieur le Duc. (*He motions to De Brissac to retire with Jean.*) Where is your lover — tell me. Tell me or —

DU BARRY. I will tell you. . . . But there is one thing you must and shall remember, Sire: 'tis not true that Monsieur de Cossé was what you think to me. I say that on my soul. (*The Nuncio, very much embarrassed, picks up the fool's cap and bells and holds them in his hands.*) Sire, I want you to remember that he never was — never. Please believe me, Louis. Not once has he tried to see me since I came here — not once . . . because, you see, we loved each other . . . and that day you first came, he saw you, and of course he was angry . . . so we quarreled and parted, because of you.

KING. But you promised to forget him.

DU BARRY. Yes, I did; I did promise and I tried to forget him; but I could not — I simply could not. And perhaps that is why we two have quarreled so often . . . Now I have told you the whole truth, Sire, everything . . . and you must see that he is not to blame — he has done nothing.

KING. I have heard quite enough in his defense.

DU BARRY. But I must defend him, Sire — I must — I will — against you, against that liar, Jean du Barry, against the whole world; for no matter what I am, his love is the only decent, clean thing in my life; the one thing I've been proud of and kept good and pure in my heart. Oh, Monseigneur, say something . . . a word in my favor. Help me, help me — do! Oh, Monseigneur, do!

NUNCIO. The King's will is my will. But should it please His Majesty to show mercy . . .

DU BARRY. Yes . . . yes . . . that's it . . . mercy. Just this once . . . just this once . . .

KING. Monseigneur, you forget that we are dealing with an enemy of France.

DU BARRY. Ah! You are making that an excuse . . . and, Sire, who made him an enemy? You sent him to Ste. Marguerite for nothing at all. Sire, have a little mercy just this once. Give me his life, not for myself, but because he loved me . . . After all, his heart is broken. You have had me here and he has been alone in a terrible place . . . Think of it! He there to suffer and I — I here with you — "The Doll of the World!" For that is what they call me. I've cried my heart out and you've never seen it — I've wanted to die, and you've never known . . . I could not tear Cossé out of my heart . . . I could not. (*The King is about to speak.*) Yes, yes, I'm coming to it, but you see that I'm to blame — he has done nothing. Do anything to me — anything — anything — only spare him. Punish me, turn me away, drive me out . . . and I'll always remember that you are the King of France, and that I am one of your humble subjects — a milliner, an ignorant little milliner whom you

deigned to smile upon; whom you tolerated because you wanted someone to amuse you. (*In a broken voice.*) And if you ever want me again, send for me, and I'll come — I'll come gladly to make you laugh . . . to crack my jokes and be your clown — (*Cries helplessly, waving the fool's stick which she has unconsciously taken from the Nuncio.*) Ah, tarata! What else can I promise? What else can I promise? . . . Oh, please do not be so hard. Won't you understand that — no, you won't . . . You want that man's life — that's all you want. Well, you shall not have it. I tell you, he has done nothing — nothing — and you shall not have it. Monseigneur, there's only one decent thing about me and he will not believe it . . . he will not.

(*She sinks at the Nuncio's feet, sobbing.*)

KING. No, I do not believe it.

DU BARRY. Well — then — I claim this man's life — for what I have been to you . . . your creature — your thing to live with. (*Rising.*) You have not paid enough for my soul, and for my body; so I want this man's life and you must give it to me — you must and you shall.

KING. I?

DU BARRY. And if there is no other way —

KING. Have a care, Madame!

DU BARRY. I'll set the story running through every Court in Europe —

(*The Nuncio tries to calm her.*)

KING. I'll drive you out of France. I'll exile you. I'll have you in the streets — by God — but I will do it!

DU BARRY. Do it! And I'll still cry out at the top of my voice that you — the King of France — murdered a man who had done nothing, nothing, — because you were jealous of him.

KING. I did send this Cossé to Ste. Marguerite . . . He has dared to return — to set foot in my Palace. There must be a strong reason. He came to see you.

DU BARRY. No, no, he did not.

KING. He did.

DU BARRY. He did not.

KING. He did.

DU BARRY. He did not.

KING. Then it was to revenge himself upon me for having parted you.

DU BARRY. No, no, no, he meant you no harm. (*To Nuncio.*) He meant him no harm — not really.

KING. He meant to strike me down like a dog.

DU BARRY (*Hesitates*). No, he did not. No, he did not.

KING. He did. He did.

DU BARRY. No, no.

KING. He did — he did. I tell you, if he did not come to see you, he came to kill me — to kill me, Monseigneur.

NUNCIO (*Crossing himself*). Madame, I do not know what to say.

KING. Now we are coming to the truth.

DU BARRY. No, no . . . Rather than let you think that . . . punish him for that, which means —

NUNCIO. Your Majesty —

KING. You know the death it means, Madame?

DU BARRY. Yes, yes, I know. I will tell you the truth. I have been lying. He did come to see me . . . he is my lover. Now do what you will with him for he is my lover and he did come to see me.

KING. Where is he?

DU BARRY. I cannot tell you.

KING. You shall!

DU BARRY. I will not. I will not. I am afraid of you . . . I'm afraid of you . . . I will not.

KING. To your knees, you wanton!

DU BARRY. I'll kneel to you but I will not tell.

KING (*Calling*). Comte Jean du Barry! I want this Cossé — now.

JEAN (*Who has hastened in*). Yes, Sire, he is —

DU BARRY (*With a cry of rage and despair, picks up the first thing she sees — a candelabrum still left on a table — to strike down the man who means to send Cossé to his death*). Ah! Now — now — will you tell? (*Jean reels to the floor, she*

strikes him again and again as he would speak.) I'll kill you . . . I'll kill you . . . I'll —

NUNCIO (*Holding her back*). Madame!

DU BARRY (*Trembling, dropping the candelabrum*). I could tear your heart out with my hands.

(*At a signal from the King, attendants retreat with Jean.*)

(*The King, his mistress and the Nuncio are silent, overcome by the scene.*)

KING (*After a long pause*). Your Eminence, let Mass be sung in the chapel to show that my days of folly with this doll are over. (*The Nuncio takes his departure.*) Until Jean du Barry can speak again, you will be closely guarded, Madame, sleeping or waking. I shall not lose this Cossé Brissac.

DU BARRY (*Still stunned — hysterically*). Ha, ha.

KING. I'll stretch cordon after cordon round Versailles, until not a fox could break through.

DU BARRY (*Laughing nervously*). Ha, ha.

KING. But, Madame, for my own pleasure, I am going to make you yourself betray him.

DU BARRY. Never . . .

KING (*Calling*). Monsieur le Duc de Brissac, I will go to Mass. Call the ladies and gentlemen of the Court.

DU BARRY (*Still laughing*). Never . . .

KING. You know he cannot escape . . . and if you do not tell me, I will torture him —

DU BARRY. Oh!

KING. — so that before he dies, he will cry for death a thousand times. (*She laughs hysterically.*) But give him up to me and he shall not die.

DU BARRY. Not die?

KING. I will imprison him. He shall live.

DU BARRY. Live?

KING. But he shall know that you are here in my arms, my mistress and my plaything. For in spite of the Mass I commanded, I shall keep my doll . . . I shall keep you to torture him and to punish you. Do you understand? (*She nods helplessly.*) But first, Madame, you shall in the presence

of others tell your lover that you shielded him as a caprice, to give him up to me in the end . . . Yes, or no?

(*The Nuncio re-enters.*)

DU BARRY. But if I do . . . and you kill him . . .

KING. I pledge myself to do no more than send him back to Ste. Marguerite.

DU BARRY. You promise that?

KING. I do.

DU BARRY. But do you swear that? Oh no, I am afraid of you . . .

KING (*Impatiently*). Yes, yes, I'll take my oath.

DU BARRY (*Lifting the Nuncio's rosary*). Swear by this, that if I betray this miserable man, you will give him his life. (*Holding up the cross to the King.*) Swear it. Swear it . . . Ah, you wretch, swear it or —

KING. I swear it.

DU BARRY (*Pointing to the Palace*). He is there . . . in my room.

KING (*To an attendant*). In Madame's room — a man — Cossé de Brissac — take him. (*At a signal from the King, the curtains are drawn aside. Some of the guests are seen in the background. Lackeys approach with lights.*) Madame la Comtesse has prepared a most novel surprise for us. To the Palace.

(*Holding out his hand to Du Barry — a broad smile on his face.*)

DU BARRY. Yes, I have found a merry jest for His Majesty. I have betrayed a friend for His Majesty's pleasure. It is very funny — O my God, how amusing it is — for see — His Majesty is wreathed in smiles. (*The clowns, hearing the music, have come running on. The King affects to explain the scene as a caprice. As the clowns begin to leap.*) Dance, dance. I have just given a wretched man up to exile and prison to make His Majesty happy.

KING (*Low to her, quickly*). Madame!

DU BARRY. Make merry! Let us make merry. You must come and see me betray my lover. You must hear me tell

him how much I love the King. (*A sob in her voice.*) Come. (*She takes a clown by each hand.*) We'll all laugh. The King must be amused.

(*She bursts into a peal of laughter.*)

KING. Madame!

DU BARRY (*Facing the King*). You can laugh at him, mock him, madden him, take my body, degrade it . . . torment it; make me your slave . . . your dog — to kick . . . your Court fool; make me a traitor . . . a Judas — that is the price I pay for his life; but you cannot tear Cossé out of my heart, you cannot, you cannot; for he is there!

(*By this time the whole Court is in consternation.*)

KING (*Beside himself with rage*). Enough! (*To the Nuncio.*) Your arm. (*The Chapel bell begins to ring.*) To Mass. (*By this time all are off. The clowns have run away in fear. The King has gone off to pray that he may forget the milliner, and the Court has gone off to laugh at the King. But Du Barry has never moved; she stands forsaken, hearing and seeing nothing.*)

CURTAIN

ACT V

After a lapse of years, we find Du Barry living in Louveciennes. Exiled to a convent on the death of the King, forsaken by Jean du Barry, who has run off to Germany (but continues to black-mail his sister-in-law from a safe distance), she has as last been permitted to live "ten leagues away from Paris." She settles in Louveciennes where she has remained in peace, quiet, and ease for fifteen years.

As the curtain goes up on the last act, we find that the French Revolution is in full swing. Marie Antoinette and her husband have been beheaded; many of the aristocrats have followed her to the guillotine.

Madame du Barry, owing to her desire to efface herself from the public memory, has now become a sort of tradition, an echo of a King who is no more, a survivor of a time now past. Had she not been cursed by the possession of so many jewels, it is doubtful that

she would have met her tragic fate; for, after all, she was a milliner to the end — one of the people.

The last Act, with its three scenes, takes place after a lapse of years, during the Revolution.

"Fate creeps in at the door."

SCENE: *A corner of Du Barry's estates at Louveciennes.*

We see a corner of the house with a balcony under which violets are growing. In the distance is a wood with a path running through it. A table, with a chair and a footstool near it, is placed on a rug under a silken canopy. The place is shut in and one must enter by an iron gate.

The curtain rises to vesper bells.

Sophie, grown older, her hair streaked with gray, is picking a rose. A young woman enters, a poorly dressed peasant; a barefoot child holds on to her skirt, eating a carrot. Other peasants pass the iron railing and gates on their way to vespers.

Hortense opens the gate and hastens in. She has grown older, — her hair is now white.

SOPHIE. Madame is expecting you, Hortense.

HORTENSE. I left Paris as soon as Labille closed the shop. (*Seeing Denys coming from the house.*) Ah, Denys, this Paris where the red flag of the Revolution waves is not the Paris where Louis the Fifteenth reigned. Now with the next Louis beheaded, and his Court gone to death, the people are blood-mad. They burn, fight, kill for a look or a word.

DENYS. Yes, devils like Robespierre and Marat have turned them into beasts.

HORTENSE. Two strangers followed me to the gate, and questioned me about Madame.

DENYS. What? . . . Say nothing to Madame, Hortense. I will look. (*Sophie and Hortense go into the house. The Angelus sounds again as Denys, picking up a little scythe, goes towards some shrubbery and suddenly tears the bushes apart.*) Who is that? Who — (*Stepping back.*) O . . . Monseigneur, you.

(*The Papal Nuncio, greatly aged, comes on, dressed as a village priest.*)

NUNCIO. Careful of my name, Denys. You see — in these terrible days — I wear the robe of a village priest — even the Nuncio is not safe now.

DENYS. How long since we have seen you, Monseigneur . . . We thought you left Paris long ago when the King died.

NUNCIO. I am just back.

DENYS. Madame will be very happy. We have no friends. Only you were faithful, when Madame was driven from Court.

NUNCIO. How is she, Denys?

DENYS. You will find her changed. She is very patient, but she is not happy. She lives in the hope of Monsieur de Cossé's release.

NUNCIO. Poor Cossé!

DENYS. From the night of the fête, when the King sent him to Ste. Marguerite, one thought has given Madame great courage . . . that you saw him as the prison doors closed on him — that he knew the truth — how Madame tried to save him.

NUNCIO. Denys, the Ste. Marguerite prison fell by the people a week ago.

DENYS (*Gladly*). Then he will come to Madame.

NUNCIO. But we do not know that he is alive. I am here to warn Madame. Again and again I heard the name of Du Barry as the mob swirled through the streets of Paris, screaming "Down with the favorite of Louis the Fifteenth — who still lives." Some wretch has brought up the name of your poor mistress. At any moment the terrible "Marseillaise" may be heard here in Louveciennes . . . We must take Madame away, Denys. (*Looking off.*) Look . . . There . . . The Tricolor . . .

(*Puts his finger warningly to his lips and goes hurriedly into the house.*)

DENYS (*Looking off*). Ah, the Reign of Terror has reached Louveciennes at last. (*Jean du Barry appears, wearing a tri-colored badge — his face unshaven — marked by dissipation,*

— *his hair grizzled. He carries a paper with a seal. Denys recognizes him.*) Comte Jean . . . after all these years —

JEAN (*Showing the tri-color*). Citizen du Barry — peasant du Barry — farmer du Barry; I have no title. — I am not an aristocrat — I have cast my lot with the people — the dear people — damn savages!

DENYS. Ah, it was you then who drew attention to us.

JEAN. My dear Denys, I had to prove my own loyalty. A man saves his neck, nowadays. Jarni! I had to contribute a victim, and why not my dear sister-in-law, whom I love so well? Announce me to Madame!

DENYS. No. You must leave Louveciennes, Monsieur.

JEAN. I must give her the decree to appear before the Tribunal of Paris. Let her be ready. They are sending a man to-day to take her.

DENYS. What? Sending a man to — Ah!

JEAN. Announce me. (*As Denys blocks his way.*) Jarni! Then I'll announce myself. (*He pushes Denys aside and starts to go into the house, when the curtains at a window are drawn aside. Jean starts back, struck, retreating.*) My God! Is that Du Barry . . . Jeanette . . . the little milliner? It is not the same woman . . . No, I cannot speak to that woman. . . . You may give her the decree. (*He goes.*)

(*Du Barry, Nuncio, and Hortense appear on the balcony.*)

DENYS (*Taking up a bunch of violets from the table, trying to conceal his agitation*). Madame's violets — almost the last.

HORTENSE (*Who, with the Nuncio, is coming down the steps*). I'll come again to-morrow, Jeanette. (*She goes.*)

(*Denys picks up the scythe and goes off slowly.*)

DU BARRY. Yes, Hortense, do.

NUNCIO. Then you will not let me persuade you to leave here . . . to leave France?

DU BARRY. No, I cannot. I must stay here and wait — wait for Cossé.

NUNCIO. I am afraid he is dead, Madame.

DU BARRY. No, no, no, he is not.

NUNCIO. Then why has he not come to you? His last words

when I saw him were: "Tell her if I live to be free, I shall come back to her."

DU BARRY. And he will come, I know — I feel it, Monseigneur. I must wait.

NUNCIO. But the danger . . .

DU BARRY. I must wait here for Cossé. Come, my friend, let me walk with you to the gates. Sophie, my hat.

(*She steps into a room from the balcony as Denys comes back.*)

DENYS (*To the Nuncio, pointing off*). Look, Monsieur: the man they are sending from Paris to arrest Madame —

NUNCIO. To arrest Madame?

DENYS. Yes.

NUNCIO. God in Heaven! It cannot be possible that they have sent — Cossé!

(*Cossé enters. He is very pale. He is followed by four men wearing the tricolor.*)

Cossé (*To the men*). Wait there.

(*The men pass off.*)

NUNCIO. They have sent you here to —

COSSÉ. Yes . . . When Ste. Marguerite fell and I was free, I found myself in a new world — blood-mad — horrible. They took me before the Tribunal —

NUNCIO. But you of all people — to arrest her —

COSSÉ. They said it was my revenge for years of imprisonment. I refused, but when I looked at their faces — I — I came . . . I could not leave her to the mercy of any one of them; it would be easier for her if I . . . Heaven help us!

DENYS (*Crying out — seeing her in the doorway, her cape on her arm*). Oh, Madame, oh!

NUNCIO. Look, Madame.

DU BARRY (*Sees Cossé*). Cossé . . .

COSSÉ. Jeanette — my poor girl.

DU BARRY (*In his arms*). It has been so long . . . so long . . .

(*Smiles at the Nuncio.*) You see? Look, Monseigneur, he is here.

COSSÉ. My poor Jeanette. . . .

HORTENSE (*Re-entering through the gate*). The place is full of —

(*Denys warns her to be silent and hastens off.*)

COSSÉ. Jeanette, forgive me — forgive me. (*At her feet.*) I want you to know that — (*chokes*) — this has been the one hope that has kept me alive all these years; to kneel at your feet and tell you that I have looked back to the day when I first doubted you — and begged God to give me one chance for the happiness that I lost. I want you to know, my darling, and remember, in spite of what may come, — that I love you dearly — dearly; that —

(*Chokes as he speaks. She rests both eyes closed against his lips. He kisses them. He pauses — overcome.*)

DU BARRY. Ah! . . . Ah, my dear, we'll pick those violets in the country, after all, won't we?

DENYS (*Returning, agitated*). Monsieur de Cossé!

(*The two men exchange glances. Murmuring voices are heard in the distance.*)

DU BARRY. What is it? (*Voices sound a little louder — faint bells are heard jangling.*) Why are those bells ringing? (*Suddenly the Marseillaise is heard.*) Oh, that terrible, terrible song! (*Sophie comes running in, crying, burying her face in her apron.*) Why — why, the people are coming — here — here. Denys, you are crying . . . Ah, they don't want me, Cossé, do they? (*As a man knocks at the gate — now locked.*) Ah — they do want me!

A VOICE. Open the gates — open, Du Barry!

CROWD. Open! Open!

COSSÉ (*To Denys*). Open — 'tis not safe to refuse. Go, Monseigneur, go — you can do more for us in Paris.

(*The Nuncio goes off. Cossé stands between Du Barry and Grieve, who presently enters from the window on the balcony, accompanied by Jean du Barry. Grieve is a tall, gaunt, cruel-looking man, with a hawk-like nose, wearing a long cloak, showing the uniform of the National Committee — a tri-colored badge is on his coat. Sans-Culottes fill the room off the balcony and begin to come out. Others are seen peering through the railings.*)

JEAN. Citizen Grieve, of the Paris Committee of Public Safety.

COSSÉ (*To himself*). Grieve . . . That brute of the Revolution.

GRIEVE (*To Sophie and Hortense*). Stand away — you two. (*To Cossé.*) Come, read the warrant.

COSSÉ. No, it is not necessary.

JEAN. It is — it is the law.

SANS-CULOTTES. Read the accusation.

CROWD. Read it. Read it.

GRIEVE. Citizen Cossé, you know why you were chosen. Read the warrant — take your revenge — arrest her.

(*The crowd now comes pouring in. A red flag is seen. Du Barry shrinks against Cossé, who holds her.*)

DU BARRY. Read it, Cossé . . . Read it.

COSSÉ (*To the crowd*). Stand back a little. (*Puts his hand gently on Du Barry's shoulder and reads the warrant.*) "Jeanette Vaubernier, known as Madame Du Barry, you are accused of being a woman without heart or pity. You are accused of being the mistress of a tyrant King, and for his pleasure betraying the man who loved you." . . . No, no, it is not true.

(*Jean laughs and Cossé, turning, strikes him.*)

GRIEVE. One word more — and I'll have you put under arrest, Citizen Cossé.

DU BARRY. Oh! (*To Grieve.*) I — I will go with you — gladly — only wait a moment. Sophie, my hat.

COSSÉ (*Aside, as he assists her to put on a cape and gives her her hat*). I will plead before the Tribunal.

JEAN. On to Paris!

SANS-CULOTTES (*Beginning to march off*). On to Paris!

(*This cry is taken up outside, and the Marseillaise grows louder. Du Barry fans herself in agitation.*)

The Second Scene

Two days and five months later.

Scene: *A room in the Conciergerie.*

Now at last we are coming to the end, and find Du Barry in prison, stripped of her luxury. Her possessions consist of a brass-bound trunk, the dress, mantle and hat in which she left

Louveciennes, a bottle of ink, a quill pen. Nothing else remains save a ring which will shortly be taken from her.

The furnishings of the room include a cot, a wash-stand with an iron bucket of water, an iron screen, an old candlestick, a stone seat, and a stool.

Outside, through a little door, we see a dreary wall and a strip of dull grey sky.

When this scene comes into view of the audience, the far-away sound of the Marseillaise is heard.

Du Barry, her face very pale, stands clutching the barred window. Marac, an officer of the Gendarmerie, is seated upon a stool behind the screen. After a second's pause, he looks out to watch the prisoner.

The door is suddenly unbolted, a key is turned in the lock, and Citizeness Rosalie, an assistant at the Conciergerie, enters. She is a kindly-faced, strapping woman of about forty, neatly dressed. She has her keys fastened to a small chain about her waist. She places a small bowl of steaming soup on the table.

ROSALIE. Madame? Madame?

MARAC (*In a low voice*). She never leaves the window. She does not seem to understand a word you say to her.

ROSALIE. They're all like that after the trial . . . when the Tribunal has condemned them.

MARAC. Well, it's your watch, Citizeness.

(*He goes out. Rosalie touches Du Barry on the shoulder.*)

DU BARRY. Oh . . . It's you, Rosalie . . . Well, did you bring any news?

ROSALIE. No, — I —

DU BARRY. My petition has reached the Tribunal by this time. Do you think they'll change their minds?

ROSALIE (*Soothingly*). Come — take a mouthful of soup. (*Leads Du Barry to the stool.*)

DU BARRY (*Sits. Mechanically takes a sip, then another, then pauses, her spoon in the air*). What have I done? Why, I was before the Tribunal twenty-four hours — fifteen minutes longer than Marie Antoinette . . . and what have I done? You're sure you've heard nothing? (*Rosalie shakes her head.*)

That's a good sign. They haven't refused me. I'm going to be free. (*Rising.*) I feel sure that I shall be free.

ROSALIE. Come, come, you must be calm and —

DU BARRY. Yes, I must be . . . (*Listening.*) What's that? Perhaps they are coming to tell me that I am free. (*She hastens to the door.*) No. There is no one there. Oh, I dare not even go to sleep . . . I never sleep now — I'm afraid . . . if I did, they might refuse my petition and —

ROSALIE (*As a cracked old bell rings*). They're here.

DU BARRY (*Shaking*). No . . . I don't want to know. . . . (*She cannot rise.*) Your hand, Rosalie . . . Do I look calm? Don't keep them waiting. Where's my powder? Where's my little bag?

(*Rosalie goes to the door.*)

(*Du Barry gets her bag, takes a brush and mirror and after brushing back her hair and powdering her face, she sits breathlessly on the stool, waiting.*)

(*Rosalie opens the door and admits Denisot, Judge of the Criminal Revolutionary Court, followed by Tavernier and Royer. All the men's faces are impassive. Du Barry looks at each one as they come in, trying to detect a ray of hope.*)

TAVERNIER. Stand up in the presence of Citizen Judge Denisot.

(*Du Barry gets up, dazed.*)

DENISOT. You made a petition before me, Judge of the Revolutionary Court, that sentence of death should be suspended. I am sent to you to ask this question —

DU BARRY. Yes, but the answer — the answer of the Court?

DENISOT. I have not yet laid the matter before the Tribunal.

DU BARRY (*Disappointed*). Oh . . .

DENISOT. Answer: in signing over all you have to the Republic, do you swear you are keeping nothing back?

ROSALIE. Oh!

DU BARRY. Nothing. I gave you everything I had.

DENISOT (*To Royer, who is whispering to him*). What? . . . Oh, yes — (*pointing to Du Barry's ring*) that ring.

DU BARRY (*Noticing it*). Oh, that's such a trifle — I didn't think — (*taking it off*) — you would want it. There, take

it. (*As Denisot takes it, the other men smile and whisper.*) Tell them, please, I'm just a beggar now.

DENISOT. I'll tell them. (*Aside to others, knowingly.*) She has nothing more. Citizeness, we wish you a peaceful sleep to-night.

(*They bow.*)

DU BARRY (*Leaning against the screen, her face behind her hands*). Ah! That means they will set me free. I . . . haven't watched all night in vain.

ROSALIE (*Looking at the men*). The brutes!

DU BARRY (*Bowing to each one as the men pass out*). I haven't watched all night in vain.

ROSALIE. They've taken everything from you — 'tis a shame!

DU BARRY (*Picking up the bowl with both hands*). I'll tell you why. . . . (*She drinks from the bowl and eats bits of bread ravenously.*) You know when I was — er — when they condemned me — a young man spoke for me before the Tribunal?

ROSALIE. Yes.

DU BARRY. Well, when I'm free, I'm going to him, just as I am, without a sou. (*She drinks again. Rosalie shakes her head pityingly.*) Rosalie, we shall be very poor, but I'm going to help him at first by taking up my old trade . . . Did you know that I was a milliner?

ROSALIE. Yes, Madame. 'Tis generally known.

DU BARRY. I'm the best milliner in France, if I do say it myself. We're going to St. Gervais to live . . . We planned to go there a long time ago — but now we are going. I shall be glad to see the country again. Oh, to be condemned to death . . . that awful, awful sensation! All those eyes staring at me . . . and then my Cossé's voice whispering: "Don't give up hope — don't give up hope!" That's past now. Rosalie . . . I've only such a short time to stay here that I — I believe I'll begin to pack up.

(*She takes down her hat and cape and lays them on the bed. Rosalie stands looking at her. Du Barry kneels and opens the trunk, humming "Amaryllis." The gong sounds in the corridor.*)

ROSALIE (*Going up to the wicket*). It's not time for the change of watch. What is it?

DU BARRY. I can pack my brushes now, and if I do stay another night, I can unpack them again — can't I, Rosalie?

(*She has taken them from the stand and puts them into the trunk; closes lid, turns the key and takes it out. During this Marac has appeared at the wicket and Rosalie has let him in.*)

ROSALIE. What! Are you back?

MARAC (*Aside to Rosalie*). Orders. It's the last watch.

ROSALIE. So soon? Oh, how can I tell her?

DU BARRY. Rosalie?

ROSALIE (*Her voice choking*). Yes, Madame.

DU BARRY (*Who is putting on her hat*). I think I may as well be ready when they come for me. (*Looks in the glass.*) I do not want to seem ungrateful . . . (*taking a rose off the hat and pinning it on the other side*) you've been so nice — so kind — but oh! I long to leave here, Rosalie. (*She slips into the cape, sits on the trunk demurely, her bag in hand.*) There . . . There . . .

(*She fans herself.*)

(*Marac sits back of the screen. Rosalie now lets in the Papal Nuncio.*)

NUNCIO (*Handing a permit*). Father Dupont is the name. (*He points off as though to some one outside.*) Citizen Cossé is with me.

(*Cossé is not seen.*)

MARAC (*To Du Barry*). A priest to hear your last confession.

DU BARRY. Eh? My last — my — what? You don't mean they won't listen to my appeal — that — that I've got to die?

ROSALIE. Yes, my poor child.

DU BARRY. Oh! (*Throwing her bag on the floor — throwing down her cape.*) No, no, no, no, I can't! I can't! (*Throwing down her hat.*) Help me, help me, help me! (*With shrieks, she runs and flings herself against the wicket.*) I don't want to die. Save me — save me — in the name of God! (*She shakes the wicket.*) Help! Help! Help! I don't

want to die . . . Denys! Cossé! Cossé! (*She shakes the bars of her window. Cossé enters and would go to her, but the Nuncio motions him back.*) Help me! I've got to live. (*She looks about, dazed, as though for a way of escape.*) Oh, I am afraid — afraid . . .

ROSALIE. Be brave! (*Du Barry sinks down trembling.*) Ah, come, come, be brave.

DU BARRY. Why tell me to be brave when I'm not brave! I'm afraid . . . I'm afraid . . . I'm . . . Feel my hands — they're as cold as ice . . . I'm afraid . . . I'm afraid. Ah, Cossé! Cossé!

COSSÉ. Jeanette, my darling.

DU BARRY (*Springing up*). Cossé!

(*He takes her in his arms. Rosalie goes behind the screen. The Nuncio watches them pityingly, standing between them and the door.*)

COSSÉ. And I can do nothing — nothing. My heart is breaking — My poor girl . . . my poor girl.

DU BARRY (*Looking at him — swallowing*). Shall you be there to . . . the end?

COSSÉ (*Not lifting his head*). Yes.

DU BARRY. Where I can see you?

COSSÉ. Yes.

DU BARRY. Then I will be brave — for you — (*Cossé rises.*) Just for you — I won't make it any worse for you, Cossé, than I can help . . . I shan't be afraid of — of anything . . . if I can see you . . . if I can see you . . .

MARAC (*Entering*). Time's up.

(*Nuncio makes a warning gesture to Cossé.*)

(*As they start to go out, Nuncio blesses her but she looks at Cossé.*)

CURTAIN

The Third and Last Scene

The same day.

"Once more we pass this way again,
Once more! 'Tis where at first we met."

SCENE: *The rue St. Honoré, in front of Labille's shop. All the other shops in the street are closed.*

It is the 8th of December, a dull, gloomy day, at five minutes past four in the afternoon.

Labille and Hortense, both grown older, are in the street outside the shop, waiting to see the tumbril bear Du Barry from the prison to the guillotine. They are in despair, hoping against hope that something may save her. Through the half-closed shutters of the shop, milliners and shop-girls peep out — all looking in one direction.

LABILLE. Any sign, Hortense?

HORTENSE. Only the black crowd at the Conciergerie waiting for the cart.

LABILLE. Poor little Jeanette . . . who would have thought . . . (*Overcome, he follows Hortense into the shop. Milliners come out on the balcony. Federals appear in the street, four pass off, beating their drums — four break ranks and patrol the various streets, passing and re-passing at intervals.*)

GRIEVE (*Enters, dressed as a Federal officer. Jean du Barry is with him in citizen's dress. The booming of a cannon is heard in the distance*). The signal . . . she's coming.

JEAN (*Looking at Labille's shop*). Jarni, what a devilish thing is fate! She passes the very spot where I first saw her. (*They are presently lost in the crowd. Denys comes down the street, sinking on a curb, his head in his hands. Shouts are heard, crowds gather gradually. The way is kept open by the Federals. Men, women, and children line the pavement. A continual buzz of voices and laughter is heard. A cocoa vendor is selling cocoa, calling: "All fresh — who'll buy a drink?" An orange girl is crying, "Portugals — all ripe — who'll buy my Portugals!" Above this, the cries of those near the death-cart are heard, always growing louder. Street urchins sell boxes, calling: "Seats — seats — two sous!" A man enters, his dress a caricature of a Herald's, carrying an old-fashioned trumpet and calling: "Make way for Louis Capet! Room for Louis the Fifteenth — come back to life to see his Favorite*

pass!" A grotesque figure enters, with a large, golden-spiked crown, wearing a calico robe on which a mock ermine, made of paper, is pinned.)

A MAN IN THE CROWD. Why dig up Louis? He'll meet her soon enough where he is.

MAN WITH THE TRUMPET. Room for Louis Capet.

CROWD. Bravo! Bravo!

MAN IN THE CROWD. Send Louis Capet about his business.

(*The crowd kicks off the Mock-King, tearing his clothes. By this time, every balcony and window is crowded. The "Carmagnole" is heard off. Federal officers come running on.*)

FEDERAL OFFICERS. Make way for the cart.

(*By this time the pavements at back are over-crowded and the people are forced into the roadway — armed Sans-Culottes force them back, stretching a chain across the street. Labille appears on his balcony.*)

A CHILD ON TOP OF A STATUE. I see her now.

MAN IN THE CROWD. Make way, make way for the cart.

A GAMIN (*Who has climbed the street lamp*). Oh, look!

(*Urchins climb up on the statue of a horse.*)

DENYS (*Rising, weak and agitated*). Oh, my poor mistress!

(*Sans-Culottes come on, waving a red banner. A low murmur rises from all directions as the song grows louder, sung by "Cart Swallows."*

"Dansons la Carmagnole,
Vive le son,
Vive le son,
Dansons la Carmagnole,
Vive le son du canon!"

The Sans-Culottes give way to the "Cart Swallows", who come on dancing straight ahead, occasionally turning round to sing at the occupant of the cart. The crack of a whip is heard, then the rumbling of the cart and every fist is raised as the cart, drawn by two horses, comes on. Du Barry is seen seated. The Nuncio, in a simple black gown, stands beside her. Her hands are fastened behind her back. She is dressed in white, her hair cut

short, looking from side to side like a hunted animal. The executioner sits on the seat with the driver, his back to her.)

GRIEVE. Stop! Let all good patriots look at Du Barry.

(*All leer, jostling each other to get closer to the cart. Du Barry looks from face to face for one glance of pity.*)

A WOMAN. Oh, you are a bad one.

ANOTHER WOMAN. Look at the Favorite.

ANOTHER WOMAN. Look at her.

ANOTHER WOMAN. Yes, look at Du Barry.

NUNCIO. My good people, cannot you let her go in peace?

(*The Crowd is silent for a moment.*)

DU BARRY. Are we near . . . are we near?

A WOMAN OF THE SANS-CULOTTES (*Stepping up to the cart-wheel*). You pay, don't you? Ah, you low thing.

DU BARRY. Yes, I pay . . .

WOMAN. She's afraid.

ANOTHER WOMAN. You're afraid — aren't you?

DU BARRY (*Choking*). Yes, I'm afraid . . .

WOMAN. Yes, she's afraid.

(*The crowd laughs.*)

DU BARRY (*Seeing Labille in front of balcony*). Labille! Labille!

LABILLE. God bless and defend you, Madame.

(*Angry shouts from the crowd.*)

HORTENSE (*Coming out on the balcony*). Jeanette, I wish these flowers could make the way easier.

(*Throws her a bunch of violets.*)

(*Angry shouts from the crowd.*)

JEAN DU BARRY (*Standing on the base of a statue, a red flag in his hand*). Madame la Comtesse, I salute you.

(*He bows.*)

(*A tricoteuse dances up to the cart. She and three or four others sing "Ça ira", dancing extravagantly.*)

DRIVER (*Snapping his whip*). Let me through. It must be over by half past four.

DU BARRY. No — stop! (*Rising.*) One moment . . . Let me live just one moment . . . Let me live for only one

minute — two minutes longer . . . I will live . . . (*Laughter and shouts from the crowd. Du Barry tries to jump off the cart. The Nuncio and the executioner hold her. She stops, seeing Cossé, who has pushed his way through the crowd, and stands near her, wringing his hands.*) Cossé! . . . (*He approaches her. The executioner lets her go.*)

VOICES IN THE CROWD (*Each line spoken by a different person*). That's Cossé.

It's her old sweetheart.

They say there was nothing between them.

Nothing between them and *she* Du Barry? Ha! Ha!

(*Crowd laughs and shouts.*)

NUNCIO (*To the crowd*). In the name of the Lord I command you, let her speak her last words.

(*The crowd hesitates.*)

COSSÉ. Jeanette, my love, my love . . . I am near you.

DU BARRY. Yes, yes, I will be brave . . . Denys, go with him — serve him as you have me and don't forget me . . . I loved you, Cossé — I loved you — through it all . . . Good-bye . . . (*Cossé gives her the violets which Hortense has thrown to her.*) One little minute, father — I'm frightened again . . . Cossé, let me see your face to the end . . . to the end . . . Good-bye. (*Smiling — trying to see through her tears.*) What a pity that we never picked those violets in the country, isn't it?

THE EXECUTIONER (*To the driver*). Now!

(*The cart is jolted along the street. Denys falls to his knees. Du Barry looks at Cossé until the cart is off. A hush falls on the crowd.*)

CURTAIN

THE DARLING OF THE GODS

On the second night of "Madame Butterfly", there began the evolution of "The Darling of the Gods" — the play which established Mr. Belasco definitely as a master-hand in the suggestion of "flavor" and "mood" by the use of the electric switchboard. During the rehearsals of this play was heard the well-known, oft-quoted exclamation of his to the stage electrician in the wee sma' hours of the early morning, amidst a period of endless *feeling* for the right results. "I don't want a mere moon," he exclaimed. "What I want is a *Japanese* moon," — which desire changed many combinations of his light plot, and added to expense!

Behind the scenes of "Butterfly", John Luther Long suggested that the two this time actually collaborate in the writing of a play; that they should continue in the Japanese trend, and that all the characters should be Japanese. How much of Mr. Belasco's old melodrama, "Il Carabiniere", was refashioned for this new drama, which was written definitely with Miss Blanche Bates in mind, is beside the point in judging the piece on its own merits. Mr. Belasco does not take one whit from the credit due Mr. Long by any claim that his own mind turned back to his earlier work. The two put in a year and a half of continued gripping with the problem of construction. Imagination and Oriental splendor were the watchwords of the moment. Mr. Belasco was saturated with the idea; nothing mattered but the play in hand. As an act was done, the scene was built; and if an act was thrown out in part or in its entirety, the scene went with it. When the work was done and ready for the curtain to rise, $78,000, pre-war value, had been expended. After a two years' run, "The Darling of the Gods" netted a $5,000 profit. The commercial Belasco, at grips with the artist Belasco, has always a poor showing!

When this drama of Japanese history and customs was completed — illustrating in its structure and tension and emotional interest that the producer knew a thing or two about the theatre appeal of Sardou's "Patrie" and "Tosca", and had already shown the Sardou influence when he came to write "Du Barry" — it opened in Washington on November 17, 1902, and came to the Belasco Theatre, New York, December 3. There was brought into court at this time the case of Onoto Watanna, author of "The Wooing of Wistaria" and "A Japanese Nightingale", who made claim that scenes and incidents in "The Darling of the Gods" had been taken from her, — even that the dialogue of some of the acts had been pirated. The fact was that behind this incident lay the peculiar animosity of the Theatrical Trust against Mr. Belasco, and the case was cleared, — another of many instances of the attacks to which this successful playwright has been subjected. In New York, "A Japanese Nightingale" opened, November 19, 1903, and ran only forty-four performances, whereas in its first season "The Darling of the Gods" passed the 186th mark.

The evolution of a play is its romance; it illustrates better than any technical discussion the painful processes by which a drama — dominantly for the stage — reaches fruition. The name alone — its advertising trademark, so to speak — comes by slow means of settlement. Many were the titles proposed for this romance of old Japan: "The Red Poppy", "The White Poppy", "Princess Yo-San", "The Heart of Yo-San", "Behind the Shoji", "The Moon-Flower", "Lily of Yeddo", "The Face in the Lantern's Light", and "Daughter of Japan", were all discussed and discarded. The manuscript revealed that Shaka, the Japanese god, was often apostrophized; surely this was a clew to the proper title. And since Yo-San danced to the gods in the Temple of War, was she not indeed a "darling of the gods"? Thus the name came to be, and with it the incorporation of the line into the script, given for *Kara* to speak: "You are the darling of the gods."

There were two problems that engrossed the attention of Mr. Belasco in the preparation of "The Darling of the Gods" —

the Japanese conventions of the Samurai period, with all the Japanese accessories these necessitated; and the peculiar lighting, to establish the tone of the stirring situations in a melodramatic, romantic story. He has himself confessed, in his "The Theatre Through Its Stage Door", how he created the illusion of the Samurai committing suicide by hari-kari, shadowed by a blood-red setting sun. He has related how he destroyed a translucent river, made at a cost of $6,500, because the souls suggested to cross it looked more like the healthy grace of girls, than the wraithlike semblance of ghosts, which they were supposed to be. The final effect he got through an expenditure of $90. One of the accessories banished for this scene was the footlights — and the papers commented on the novelty of it, whereas, in the old Madison Square days, Mr. Belasco had already done the same thing. Which shows that often a stage director will hit upon a method of reaching a result, and resort to it over and over without ever giving a thought as to whether or not he is a "stage reformer."

Again, Mr. Belasco made use of every means to place his audience in the very welter of Japanese color and mood, by well-laid light plots, by well-matched color, by the choice of tableaux, pictures which showed symbolical motives underlying the theme of the play. Cherry blossoms and lanterns, high-vaulted and sinister rooms, the glare of torch fires, — in all of these Mr. Belasco played upon the switchboard of his lights, and moved at will the emotions of those "in front." No man in the theatre has done more than he to add to the excitement of a play; and one must consider that this was done before Appia and Stanislavsky and Reinhardt had been heard of in America. Mr. Belasco confesses that many people came to study his magic, and found it all a matter of technique and feel. To which must be added a punctilious care for detail, in this particular play much of it being imported from Japan.

On December 28, 1903, Beerbohm Tree produced "The Darling of the Gods" at His Majesty's Theatre, London, with the aid of suggestions received from Mr. Belasco, though the press noted that Mme. Sada Yacco was his authority. The

English actor in his curtain speech made mention of the marvellous script sent him from America — its detailed indication of every small property, its notation of switchboard manœuvres. Mr. Belasco had worked out so specifically every problem of the piece that it was impossible for any one to miss the "dressing-up" of a veritable melodrama into some sort of authentic impression of Japanese history.

But the sum and substance of all this genuine stage trickery was that Mr. Belasco practised necromancy in his staging of such spectacular plays. One went away recalling the luxuriance of the scene, not caring how much or how little dramatic quality there might be in the story or in the method of its unfolding. In those early years of the new century, one went to a Belasco play as one went to a crystal-gazing shop — anesthesia already on one at the mere suggestion of going! Thus the public of that day had a set phrase: "to be hypnotized by the Belasco atmosphere."

"The Darling of the Gods" was burlesqued on June 22, 1903, under the title of "Darling of the Gallery Gods", the dialogue in Tenderloin jargon, and the chief player, Trixie Friganza.

THE DARLING OF THE GODS

By David Belasco and John Luther Long

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THE DARLING OF THE GODS

ORIGINAL CAST

As played at the Belasco Theatre

SAIGON, *Prince of Tosan*		Charles Walcot
ZAKKURI, *Minister of War*		George Arliss
KARA, *outlaw prince and leader of the two-sword men*		Robert T. Haines
TONDA-TANJI, *nephew of Zakkuri*		Albert Bruning
SIR YUKE-YUME	*guests at the Feast of a Thousand Welcomes*	James W. Shaw
LORD CHI-CHI		Edward Talford
ADMIRAL TANO		Cooper Leonard
HASSEBE SOYEMON		Warren Milford
KATO, *a fisher of carp*		J. Harry Benrimo
SHUSSHOÖ, *Majordomo*		F. Andrews
INU, *a Corean giant, Yo-San's slave*		Harrison Armstrong
YOBAN, *watcher at the Prince of Tosan's Yashiki*		Carleton Webster
CRIER OF THE NIGHT HOURS		David Lipman
KUGO, *the gnarled-back*	*seven spies of Zakkuri*	Maurice Pike
SHIBA, *teller of who comes and goes*		E. P. Wilks
MIGAKU, *the shadow*		Rankin Duvall
KOJIN, *gatherer of geisha tattle*		Morris Cook
ATO, *watcher of watchers*		Joseph Tuohy
TCHO		Winthrop Chamberlain
TARO		John Dunton
MAN IN THE LANTERN		Westropp Saunders
THE IMPERIAL MESSENGER		F. A. Thomson
FIRST SECRETARY	*in the War Office*	Legrand Howland
SECOND SECRETARY		A. D. Richards
BANZA, *priest of the band of Samurai*	*Kara's two-sword men*	Gaston Mervale
NAGOYA		Albert Bruning
TORI		Fred'k A. Thomson
KORIN		Rankin Duvall
BENTO		J. Harry Benrimo
KOSA		Richard Warner
TAKORO		John Dunton
KAYE		James W. Shaw
NAGOJI		A. D. Richards
JUTSU		Dexter Smith

Little Sano, *son of Nagoya*	Madge West
Chidori, *Tonda-Tanji's aunt*	Mrs. Charles Walcot
Rosy Sky, *a dweller in "The City without Nights"*	Eleanor Moretti
Setsu, *Yo-San's maid*	Ada Lewis
Kaëde, *a teacher of manners*	Dorothy Revell
Madame Asani, *the beautiful geisha of Red Maple Gardens (with her troupe of geisha and the three little geisha apprentices)*	France Hamilton
The Fox Woman, *who is said to "devour men's souls"*	Mrs. F. M. Bates
Isamu, *Chidori's maid*	May Montford
Niji-Onna, *Rosy Sky's maia*	Helen Russell
Nu, *a singing girl*	Madeleine Livingston
Yo-San, *daughter of the Prince of Tosan*	Blanche Bates

Gentlemen of Rank: Messrs. Redmund, Stevens, Dunton, Smith, Meehan, Richards, Shaw, Chamberlain and Shaw.

Geisha Girls: Misses Winard, Karle, Vista, Mardell, Coleman and Ellis.

Singing Girls: Misses Livingston, Mirien and Earle.

Heralds from the Emperor, maids-in-waiting to the Princess, screen bearers, Kago men, coolies, retainers, runners, servants, geisha, musume, priests, lantern bearers, banner bearers, incense bearers, gong bearers, jugglers, acrobats, torturers, carp flyers, imperial soldiers and Zakkuri's musket-men.

The Japanese musical instruments on the stage are the biwa, samisen, koto, tsudzumi and fuye.

ACT I

First Scene: "The God in the Mountain."

Second Scene: A look into the garden within the Yashiki of the Prince of Tosan. From sunset to dark.

"A Butterfly Catches a Butterfly."

Third Scene: The great state hall during the night of "The Feast of a Thousand Welcomes."

"The Face in the Lantern's Light."

ACT II

First Scene: Kanzashi Forks at the Hour of the Ox. (Two o'clock.)
Within the Shadows of the Gates.

Second Scene: The shoji of Yo-San among the moonflowers.

"Nothing ever changèd since the days of the Gods,
Water flows the same, love goes the same."

ACT III

(Forty days later.) Behind the shoji of Yo-San's sanctuary.

"The Fate Hour."

ACT IV

(Later the same day.) The old sword-room — the cabinet of the Minister of War.

"Nothing for Nothing is Given Here."

ACT V

First Scene: The meeting place at the ruined shrine of the Goddess Kwannon.

"Dusk Hour of the Third Day."

Second Scene: The Red Bamboo forest.

"The Tryst of Death."

Intermezzo

Third Scene: A thousand years have passed. The Mountain of Sheide (between the heavens and the hells).

"The Brink of the River of Souls."

Fourth Scene: The First Celestial Heaven.

The action of the play takes place in Japan during the period of the "sword edict", when the Emperor took away the swords of the Samurai — the two-sword men.

The play deals with a band of ten patriots who refused to obey the edict and became outlawed.

The entire production under the personal supervision of Mr. Belasco.

Music under the direction of William Furst.

Scenery by Ernest Gros.

Stage decorations and accessories after designs by Wilfred Buckland.

Electricians, Louis Hartmann and Kliegl Brothers.

THE CAST

His Majesty's Theatre, London

THE DARLING OF THE GODS

By David Belasco and John Luther Long

Zakkuri	Mr. Tree
Kara	Basil Gill
Saigon	S. A. Cookson
Tonda-Tanji	Cecil Rose

Hassebe Soyemon	Eric Leslie
Shusshoö	A. C. Grain
Inu	Lyn Harding
Yoban	E. S. Stewart
Crier of the Night Hours	Berridge Fraser
Kugo	Frederick Meers
Shiba	Roy Cushing
Migaku	James Ford
Kojin	Kennerly Jones
Ato	Frank Stanmore
Tcho	J. C. Taylor
Taro	H. Brichta
Man in the Lantern	Stuart Grahame
Kato	William Haviland
The Imperial Messenger	L. E. Hill
Kihei	J. Wood
Rihaci	Allen Jeffries
Banza	J. Fisher White
Nagoya	K. T. Trotter
Tori	G. R. Cockburn
Korin	E. L. Deane
Bento	Francis Chamier
Little Sano	Master Clarence Williams
Yo-San	Lena Ashwell
Setsu	Daisy Roche
Chidori	Mrs. Stanislaus Calhaem
Maid	Hilda Grey
Rosy Sky	Maud Hildyard
Niji-Onna	May Chafey
Kaëde	Sidney Fairbrother
Madam Asani	Mimi St. Cyr
Nu	Miss Inescort

ACT I

At the close of the overture, the curtains are drawn aside to show the sacred mountain in the far distance, and in the foreground, the great Buddha of Kamakura. This fades away into the

FIRST SCENE: *A glimpse of the gardens within the yashiki of the Prince of Tosan.*

"A Butterfly catches a Butterfly."

It is late afternoon, toward sunset. The shadows are long and dark; but between them the sun is still bright. A beautiful garden with many flowers is seen stretching toward the back: trees, poppies, azaleas and plum-blossoms are faintly outlined. A curved bridge is thrown over a stream.

As the curtain rises, music is heard; it continues throughout this tableau, varying with the moods of Yo-San.

Setsu, Yo-San's maid, is kneeling, binding a bunch of blossoms to put into her basket.

Yo-San enters with an armful of flowers, looking about for more. She gives them to Setsu.

The last rays of the setting sun fall on a clump of azaleas from which a butterfly rises. Yo San watches it as it flies away and settles again. Then motioning to her maid to keep silent, she tip-toes into the red sunshine. As the butterfly rises again, she catches it and holds it in her closed hand.

As Setsu runs toward her, Yo-San opens her hand to set the butterfly free and finds that she has killed it. She is very sorry and, with the maid's help, tries in vain to make it fly — then blows it gently off her hand. It falls to the ground. As she looks at it, an ominous peal of thunder is faintly heard.

With a cry, she grasps Setsu in fright. As she stands in terror, the rumble is followed by another. Night comes on. In the distance the voice of Kaëde calls in a monotonous chant:

KAËDE. O Yo-San! Hai! (*In fear, Yo-San and Setsu gather up their flowers and run off.*) (*A slight pause.*) O Yo-San! Hai!

THE CURTAIN FALLS IN DARKNESS

SECOND SCENE: *Banquet room of the palace during "The Feast of a Thousand Welcomes."*

Music is heard from the interior of the palace. The scene is dark at first, then lanterns flicker here and there and dim shadowy forms of servants and lantern-bearers are seen.

Soft blue moonlight shows the courtyard gardens, stone steps, and part of the palace.

The scene is gradually illuminated during the preparations for "The Feast of a Thousand Welcomes."

A table, in the form of a maple-leaf, is placed at the left. Kneeling-cushions and rice bowls are set about.

When the servants bearing lanterns have gone off, Kaëde, a prim woman, appears on the balcony.

KAËDE (*Calling*). O Yo-San! O Yo-San! (*Snaps her fan impatiently.*) Where is the honorable headstrong Yo-San? (*Turns and goes off as Yo-San and Setsu steal on, carrying their sandals in their hands.*)

YO-SAN. It is Kaëde, my teacher of manners.

SETSU. Aie, never were you out so late, exalted Princess.

YO-SAN (*Peeping about*). Look, Setsu, the lanterns are lighted for a feast.

SHUSSHOÖ (*Heard off, calling*). Isoge?

SETSU (*Frightened*). Shusshoö!

(*They dart behind a large gong.*)

(*Shusshoö, the Majordomo, enters, followed by four servants bringing on the seat of honor to the center.*)

SHUSSHOÖ. Bear it here, snails. If all does not pass faultlessly to-night, you (*to some of the servants*) shall pay with your heads. (*To others.*) You with your feet.

(*Following his directions, cushions are placed for Kara, the guest of honor, also a lighted hibachi and an arm-rest. The servants bow to Shusshoö and disappear with him.*)

YO-SAN (*Steps out from her hiding place, attracted by the music*). Listen. . . . Come, let us peep.

SETSU. That would be very wrong. That is geisha music.

(*She follows Yo-San's example, however, and peeps.*)

YO-SAN (*Looking off to the right*). Setsu, there are men in there — *men* . . . Twenty — *men!*

SETSU. O Lady Yo, it is wrong for you to look at a man.

YO-SAN. I will . . . I will look at everything here. Who will be present to-night? (*Peers at bits of parchment on the cushions while Setsu stands wringing her hands. Yo-San reads a parchment on the cushion of the seat of honor.*) "The seat of the august guest of the Feast of a Thousand Welcomes." He must be next to a god, Setsu, that my father should show him such honor. (*Takes the card off the cushion and studies it.*) "Prince Kara" . . . O name of a thousand beautiful whispers . . . Kara! (*As the moonlight falls on the cushion.*) The Goddess of the Moon touches with her finger the place where you will sit. Prince Kara, I make my kowtow to you.

KAËDE (*Suddenly entering*). O Mistress Yo, come quickly. You are to dress . . . Your father wishes you to see, for the second time, your betrothed, the Honorable Tonda-Tanji.

YO-SAN (*In disgust*). Aie, Tonda-Tanji.

(*Rosy Sky enters, singing. She carries a veil and is gaily dressed, to show her caste. She is followed by Niji-Onna.*)

SETSU. O Princess Yo-San, come.

KAËDE. Do not look, immaculate Princess.

YO-SAN (*Staring at Rosy Sky*). Is she not lovely? . . . Who are you?

ROSY SKY. I am Bara-Bara, but foreigners of wealth call me Rosy Sky.

KAËDE (*Wailing*). Aie!

YO-SAN. I am Yo-San. . . . How is your honorable health? (*As they salute, each maid does the same behind her mistress.*) Do you happily eat well?

ROSY SKY. I have not happily eaten well of late.

YO-SAN. For that I am augustly sorry. But your husband eats happily well — your most noble husband?

ROSY SKY. I have no most noble husband — unfortunately none.

YO-SAN. Is he solemnly dead?

ROSY SKY. He has not yet joyously lived.

YO-SAN. No?

ROSY SKY. I have not married a husband — not seriously.

YO-SAN. Then how are your honorable children? Do they eat well?

(*Rosy Sky is astonished.*)

KAËDE. Guileless Princess, you do not know what you say. (*Tugging at Yo-San's kimono — aside.*) She is a geisha.

YO-SAN (*Aside to Kaëde*). Look in your book and see if all are not alike in the sight of the gods.

KAËDE. Aie!

YO-SAN. O fortunate Miss Geisha, you will see this feast.

ROSY SKY. Yes, there will be beautiful young men here. They will acclaim me.

YO-SAN. Aie!

ROSY SKY. Some of them will wish to accompany me home.

YO-SAN. How beautiful! (*To Kaëde, who is wringing her hands.*) Say so.

KAËDE. Odious!

YO-SAN. Please excuse her — she is my hateful teacher of manners. (*She goes to Rosy Sky and, lifting her veil, takes possession of it as Rosy Sky tries in vain to keep it.*) You are very pretty, but too much painted. Why do you wear your obi tied in front?

ROSY SKY. I live in Geisha Street, "the little city without nights." 'Tis thus I make my sign for men.

YO-SAN. Sign? For men?

KAËDE (*Horrified*). Aie!

ROSY SKY (*Simply*). I am a courtezan.

YO-SAN. Court-e-zan? There are so many strange words I have not heard. You see I only came into the world three days ago.

ROSY SKY. Into the world three days ago? . . .

YO-SAN. I lived in the convent temple and danced to please the gods. Oh, it was dull! But now, I am permitted to learn the things of the world. You may therefore tell me: what is a — (*Kaëde tries to stop her*) — cour-te-zan?

ROSY SKY. A courtezan is one dedicated to love.

YO-SAN. Love? Beautiful Gods, that is nice! O you must be a good girl, a good girl, to be dedicated to love. (*To Kaëde.*) Say so.

KAËDE. Reprehensible!

YO-SAN (*Stamps her foot*). Go — love is not in your book — Go! (*Kaëde, wailing softly, disappears.*) She is such unfertile soil for love. Setsu, bring cushions quickly. (*Setsu brings cushions. Yo-San and Rosy Sky sit and, behind them, facing each other, the maids sit.*) Further concerning love . . . Love is nice?

ROSY SKY (*Placidly*). Oh, yes. (*Calls.*) Niji-Onna? (*Her maid pushes the paint towards Rosy Sky who rouges her lips as she speaks.*) Kindly permit me . . . I am pale.

YO-SAN. O Rosy Sky, more paint! If a man kissed you, he would be poisoned.

ROSY SKY. Kissed me? What is that?

YO-SAN. A kiss is a custom of foreign countries. It is — well — a something that belongs to love. (*They both kowtow.*) I found out about it in this strange, red book from the large foreign village called United States. (*She shows the book, half hidden in her sleeve.*) It is in this . . . (*In an instructive manner.*) Love is full of kisses and embraces and touches: the kiss goes on the lips, the embrace goes on the waist and the touches — almost all over. (*Yo-San, still on her knees, kisses Rosy Sky, then draws back.*) There! That is what men do . . . Did you like it? Say so.

ROSY SKY. What does it mean?

YO-SAN (*Reflectively*). I think it requires a man; the book said so. And it should be long and slow. (*Struck.*) Oh, I forgot the embrace at the waist.

(*Places her arms round Rosy Sky's waist and squeezes her. Rosy Sky gives a little squeal.*)

ROSY SKY. It seems foolish.

YO-SAN. Not with a man — the book says so.

ROSY SKY (*Painting the cheek Yo-San has kissed*). Pardon, but you have rubbed off my paint, the badge of my calling: "Much paint, little virtue."

YO-SAN (*Musing*). Virtue . . . Oh yes, they value that very highly at the temple.

ROSY SKY. I do not. It is amusing to be a courtezan. All night we hold revelry in Geisha Street.

SETSU. Aie!

YO-SAN. I shall begin to-night to be a courtezan. Already I have plans. I will wear your veil and your kimono. (*Tries to take a kimono from Niji-Onna, who carries it in a bundle on her back.*) Just for to-night, let me be you. Just for to-night. Here . . . here . . . here is money.

ROSY SKY. But I shall have twenty lovers present.

YO-SAN. Twenty? Gods, think of it!

SETSU (*Horrified*). Shaka! Twenty!

YO-SAN. O Setsu, you do not understand. (*Yo-San takes the bundle containing the kimono.*) There is more money to pay for the happiness you lose to-night.

(*Gives Rosy Sky money from the purse which she keeps in her sleeve.*)

KAEDE (*Entering*). August one, your father is coming. Zakkuri comes with him. Go quickly.

ROSY SKY (*Her look changing to stolid hatred*). Zakkuri!

(*Setsu, taking Yo-San's cushion and veil, hastens off with Kaëde.*)

YO-SAN (*In possession of Rosy Sky's kimono*). Go, Rosy Sky.

KAËDE. Yo-San!

YO-SAN. Beautiful Gods, I shall be a courtezan.

(*Singing Rosy Sky's song, she disappears.*)

ROSY SKY. That terrible Zakkuri who tired of me — Some day I shall make him very much trouble.

(*Followed by Niji-Onna, she goes off.*)

(*A pole-bearer and boy enter, taking their places on a platform.*) *The boy, climbing the pole, looks off to see who comes.*)

(*The Prince of Tosan, a man of noble type, his white hair worn in a queue, enters, preceded by Shusshoö who faces him, kowtowing obsequiously.*)

SHUSSHOÖ. O golden Prince — O master of Princes! All is waiting for your "Guest of a Thousand Welcomes" who comes not.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Wait — he has twenty minutes until the hour.

(*Shusshoö kowtowing, rises, goes up to the foot of the steps where he kneels again as Zakkuri enters. Zakkuri is a crafty, inscrutable man, with a cat-like smile. His black hair is worn in a queue.*)

ZAKKURI (*Coming forward*). I have hunted this outlaw, Kara, your guest of honor, for nearly a year without success. It has been the one blot upon an otherwise faultless administration as War Minister. The Emperor — heaven-born — ancestored by gods — (*both kowtow*) is exceedingly annoyed. To-day he would not see me — me — Zakkuri! That is the nail in my sandal. But possibly my spies have taken advantage of your guest and have killed him.

(*He crosses and fills a pipe, kneeling by the hibachi.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. I do not like your use of my sacred hospitality, O Zakkuri! You put me in the position of a Prince who gives a feast to which the guest is decoyed whilst spies wait to strangle him.

ZAKKURI (*Smiles*). Yielding that — consider: your guest is an outlaw. He has no appropriate place where I can kill him. He is so very inaccessible that you, yourself, had to paint your invitation upon the trees of the forest: "Invited: Kara, Prince and outlaw, at the hour of the dog, on the third day, in repayment of an obligation of honor. Signed: Saigon, Prince of Tosan."

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Before Shaka, I wish I had let this obligation pass . . .

ZAKKURI. You could not. (*Puffs.*) He saved your life and the exalted Princess Yo-San's. Such an obligation must be acknowledged within the third day.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. There is more, Zakkuri, than the debt of life : the robbers who attacked me on Hakoné — as I brought my daughter from the convent — would have left me dead . . . but they would have dishonored my Yo-San. The gods sent this young Prince to save her.

ZAKKURI. Possibly. Still he is a Samurai leading a band of ten, each carrying two swords, though the Emperor — son of the gods — (*both kowtow*) has commanded that they be given up. In all Japan, only these ten refuse to obey.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. In all Japan, only these ten men are brave. It is no little thing to ask a man who has fought — always fought, to fight no more ; to leave his country in the hands of a tyrant.

ZAKKURI (*Aghast*). The Emperor is our omnipresent earth-god ; (*both kowtow*) and you are a magnanimous prince whose gifts are magnificent. (*Bows.*) I did not hear what you just said.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Shaka grant that Kara did not leave for this feast to-night.

ZAKKURI. He must publicly demonstrate his courage. Should he refuse, he brands himself a coward. His own men would no longer follow him. Why, he would not even be given a death name. He left, but — (*laughs in silent mirth.*) Still, as you say, he has a few moments to spare. (*Looks off.*) My man Kugo comes with news . . . You need not observe. (*The Prince of Tosan turns his back as Kugo enters. He is a sharp-featured man of a low type, his body gnarled and spidery.*)

KUGO (*Kowtowing to Zakkuri, breathlessly*). Kara, my Lord — Kara —

ZAKKURI. Is dead ?

KUGO. No, but —

ZAKKURI (*Savagely, with a half grunt, stamping his feet in anger*). Ah !

KUGO. He has moved as an unseen spirit, but now he comes toward Hokkaido gate.

ZAKKURI (*With a cat-like smile, polishing his long finger nails*). Ah, my hunt ends.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. He comes as my guest. Even the Emperor may not harm him while he is within my yashiki.

ZAKKURI. True, but he is outside your yashiki. (*To Kugo.*) Twenty of your men at the Hokkaido gate. Let him not live to pass it.

(*Exit Kugo. Inu enters. He is a huge Corean slave who carries his sandals in his hand. He passes off.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Who has made a furtive sign to indicate Inu's presence*). The Princess Yo-San's slave. He is dumb, but he can hear too well.

ZAKKURI (*Clapping hands, calls*). Ato! (*Ato enters quickly, falling at Zakkuri's feet.*) To the Emperor. (*All bow.*) Say that his abject slave, Zakkuri, has taken Kara.

(*Ato kowtows and hastens away.*)

KAËDE (*Enters, wearing her official dress*). August Prince: (*bows*) your daughter is prepared for the second look-at meeting with her betrothed, the lord Tonda-Tanji.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Let her appear. (*Kaëde goes. At this moment Tonda-Tanji is heard off, singing in a high falsetto: "Where the moon is brightly beaming."*) The honorable Tonda-Tanji comes.

TONDA-TANJI (*Enters, singing, strumming upon an instrument. He is a young exquisite, a dandy of Japan. He kowtows to Zakkuri*). August Uncle, I break my bones before you.

ZAKKURI. O exquisite and — (*bows, getting a whiff of perfume, motioning him to keep at a distance*) highly scented nephew.

TONDA-TANJI (*Turning, that they may admire his costume*). Is not this dress in perfect taste?

KAËDE (*Off*). The exalted Princess crosses the courtyard.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Shall we now consider the hour of the ceremony?

(*Inu enters and goes to the platform. Six screen girls appear, followed by Nu, carrying three beautiful gold screens, figured and transparent. Two girls are assigned to each screen. When opened, the screens make a private room for Yo-San. The girls kowtow to the ground as Yo-San enters in a state kimono glittering with gold embroidery, holding a fan between the men*

and herself with a great show of modesty. She is followed by Setsu, a fan bearer, Kaëde, and four waiting maids. Yo-San kowtows profoundly. Kaëde and other women kneel.)

ZAKKURI. Serene Princess.
PRINCE OF TOSAN. Obedient daughter.
TONDA-TANJI. O eyes of the moon!
Speaking at the same time.

(*All kowtow to Yo-San.*)

YO-SAN. My venerated Father . . . (*To all, as she comes down.*) I break my bones to you.

(*Yo-san draws in her breath between her teeth, the maids following her example. As she approaches her father, she stands in the enclosure of screens.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. We speak of marriage, my daughter. Are you prepared? (*Yo-San gives a flirt of her fan to cover her face.*) She is most properly shy.

(*She makes a grimace at Setsu, but as she gently lowers her fan, she is once more the picture of Oriental modesty.*)

TONDA-TANJI. What says the dove-eyed one?

YO-SAN (*Peeping over her fan, at her father*). I do not wish to marry him — just now. As I said at our look-at meeting, I do not like him.

(*The Prince of Tosan and Kaëde are shocked.*)

TONDA-TANJI. Is it possible?

ZAKKURI. What difference should that make to a dutiful wife? Princess, you were betrothed to my excellent nephew at three.

YO-SAN. Do you dutifully remember every small thing that happened when you were three?

(*Her father grins with pleasure at her wit.*)

TONDA-TANJI. But you would grow to admire me, zephyr of heaven.

YO-SAN. I could grow to hate you.

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Sternly*). But you will not, my Yo-San.

YO-SAN. I have not been taught to hate . . . You are beautiful, O Tonda-Tanji, as an exquisite red kakemono. But I would honor you more if you were brave. Gods, how I love a brave man! Why do you not do a mighty deed that would make — er —

TONDA-TANJI (*Very eagerly*). What?

YO-SAN. Your picture for sale at Yeddo?

TONDA-TANJI. Serene Princess, permit me to grant your every happy wish.

YO-SAN. You cannot . . . I wish to love my husband.

ZAKKURI. I never heard of anything so progressive.

TONDA-TANJI. Oh, I shall permit you to.

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Apologetically*). She does not understand this love of which she speaks.

YO-SAN. Oh yes, — kisses and embraces make up this new thing they call love.

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Sternly to Kaëde*). Where did she learn this?

KAËDE. In a foreign red book, O gracious Prince.

YO-SAN. In the book and inside of me.

(*She lays her hand on her heart.*)

ZAKKURI. Ah, inside of her . . . There is more . . .

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Noble Zakkuri, she is miserably young, she does not know her wants.

YO-SAN. I do not want much: only to be perfectly happy all my life.

ZAKKURI (*Mockingly*). Ho!

(*During the following, Tonda-Tanji looks at Yo-San with greedy eyes.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Aside to Zakkuri, apologetically*). She has no mother. . . .

(*Zakkuri and the Prince kowtow.*)

YO-SAN. As yet, I have not felt one sorrow; no sorrow do I wish. The gods have kept large watchful eyes upon me — I am the plaything of their happy moods. My life has been as a moonflower's in the dawn, nodding its plume to every gentle wind. Japan has flung its perfume for my smile, its blossoms for a carpet where I tread . . . I live, I know not why, nor how, nor ask the gods. Perhaps I am like the rose: my simple fate, — only to be fair to see.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. My little witch of all the moons!

YO-SAN. An hour ago a butterfly was dancing in the wind. I killed it in its flight. I am sorry. Its life was finished in

my hand. (*Opens her palm sadly.*) I do not think it knew it died. To the high gods we are no more than butterflies ; yet we make life a thing of sadness. O Shaka, god of life and fate, send no evils after me, remembering I was created — not to suffer — merely to be pleasing. (*To her father.*) Say so. (*To Zakkuri.*) Say so.

TONDA-TANJI. She has the soul of a goddess — I want it.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. This is not life, my child : this chatter of sunshine and butterflies.

ZAKKURI. There are shadows . . . there are shadows.

(*He glides toward her as he speaks.*)

YO-SAN (*Retreating to her father*). Father. . . . (*To Zakkuri with a gesture.*) Drive away your shadows, I will be happy — (*Stamping her foot.*) I will, because I will !

PRINCE OF TOSAN. I do not see in wayward you, my dutiful Yo-San. What has changed you ? Speak.

(*Yo-San motions with her fan. Setsu places a cushion and retreats. Yo-San kneels on the cushion.*)

YO-SAN. I will not lie, I am changed — and it is beautiful.

(*Claps her hands twice. Nu stops singing.*) I love. . . .

TONDA-TANJI. Love ? (*To Zakkuri.*) This thing she spoke of then, is —

ZAKKURI. But where did she see a man to love ?

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Where ?

YO-SAN. On Hakoné mountain, three days ago . . . in the flash of a lantern's light —

ZAKKURI (*To Tonda-Tanji*). Kara !

TONDA-TANJI. Ah !

(*The Prince of Tosan stands dumbfounded.*)

YO-SAN (*Simply*). I opened my eyes when I thought I was dead . . . and there he was. His lips smiled at me . . . I smiled a little back . . . I gave him all my souls — he gave me his : therefore I belong to him. It is finished.

(*She rises.*)

TONDA-TANJI. But she is pledged to me.

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Taking her hand gently, but with authority*). Prepare, Yo-San : set the wedding day for Tonda-Tanji.

YO-SAN. . . . I set the day on which he does a mighty deed.

ZAKKURI (*Aside to Tonda-Tanji*). Kara comes by the Hokkaido gate. My spies will give him to you — dead. Humor her. It is an important pairing — money and prestige.

TONDA-TANJI (*To Yo-San, who is about to go*). One moment, radiant Princess. There is an outlaw at large, the fiercest in all Japan. I will show you my hands red in his blood. Will you then set the day?

YO-SAN. You? . . . A fierce outlaw? Yes, on that day I will name the hour of my wedding. (*Aside to Setsu.*) He will never do it, that lotus flower. Hai!

TONDA-TANJI. You pledge that day by Shaka?

YO-SAN. By Shaka! I give you double bowing. (*Both kowtow.*) An outlaw! Hai! Hai!

(*She goes into the palace, followed by Inu and women.*)

(*Tonda-Tanji strolls off.*)

(*A carp flyer enters, bearing a paper fish on a string. He runs twice round the stage followed by a tumbler. During the entrance of the guests, the carp flyer goes up, gives his carp to a retainer — and joins the tumbler in acrobatic feats. When the guests are all present, the tumblers leave the scene. Four servants enter, carrying four lanterns.*)

SHUSSHOÖ (*Entering*). Your guests arrive, Prince of Princes.

(*The guests are Sir Yuke-Yume, Lord Chi-Chi, Admiral Tano, Hassebe Soyemon, and gentlemen of rank, twelve guests in all.* (*Musume enter.*)

HASSEBE SOYEMON. I wager my house on the salubrious hill, Lord Chi-Chi, that in spite of the illustrious Zakkuri's pitfalls, the guest of honor will yet arrive.

(*All laugh cynically, some shake their heads.*)

ZAKKURI. You value your house too lightly, O Hassebe Soyemon.

HASSEBE SOYEMON. I say 'tis unfair to set a pack of men, like hounds, on one man, even if he has disobeyed the sword edict.

ZAKKURI (*Angrily*). Treason! (*The two men face each other, fairly breathing fire.*) As the servant of the Heaven Born, the celestial Emperor by divine right — (*kowtows*) who

holds every sword in Japan save ten — whose dogs we are (*all kowtow to the floor*) to torture by choking with salted rice, by the cool water in sight but never at the lips — I ask : did I hear aright ?

HASSEBE SOYEMON (*Frightened*). No, I did not speak.

(*A bell begins to strike the hour of nine.*)

YOBAN (*Calling off*). It is the hour of the dog.

(*A slight pause, then five strokes are sounded.*)

ZAKKURI (*Sure that his spies have killed Kara*). The hour of nine.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. The time for the ceremony of welcome . . . Friends, bear witness that I was waiting.

(*The Prince stands by his seat. All listen to the bell.*)

ZAKKURI. The moment passes . . . The bell ceases . . . He is not here. Coward !

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Shaka !

(*A trumpet sounds, Shusshoö goes off hastily.*)

(*Drums are heard at right.*)

YOBAN (*Announcing off*). Prince Kara enters the palace.

(*There is a hush of amazement. Four servants appear, strewing paper addresses of welcome.*)

SHUSSHOÖ (*Announcing*). The honorable guest of a thousand welcomes ! His Highness, Kara, Prince of Chosu.

(*Kara enters. There is a murmur of admiration. Zakkuri's face is drawn in anger. Following the Prince of Tosan's example, guests breathe in sharply through their teeth, to express welcome, kowtowing. The musume bow abjectly. Kara for a moment eyes the guests whom he knows, to a man, to be his enemies ; then, with a lordly salutation draws in his breath and greets his host. From under his short haori a bit of his shirt of old mail can be seen. A pair of swords curve down in his girdle at the left side : one sword is short, one is long . . . they are splendidly carved and of beaten gold. As he comes toward his host he takes his two swords, holds them out to the Prince, who receives them. The Prince of Tosan hands the two swords to Shusshoö, who puts them in a sword-rack.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Illustrious Daimyo, your swords are sacred within my yashiki.

ZAKKURI (*Politely*). By which way, illustrious Kara, did you come?

KARA. By the Hokkaido gate.

ZAKKURI (*Smiling serenely*). I trust I do not outrage this magnificent hospitality, when I state that I had twenty spies there to kill you.

KARA (*Indifferently*). Yes?

ZAKKURI. It is a beautiful night. (*Kara bows assent.*) One to die in.

KARA. Do you die to-night?

ZAKKURI. Do you?

KARA. The gods alone order death.

(*Both kowtow politely.*)

(*Kugo, panting, comes on from the left to Zakkuri.*)

KUGO (*Under his breath*). I swear he is wounded . . . a dozen cuts . . . I saw them.

ZAKKURI. But he lives . . . (*Stepping on Kugo.*) Dog!

(*Kugo hastens off in pain.*)

TONDA-TANJI (*Enters and speaks to Zakkuri, aside*). His swords are charmed . . . I saw him fight.

(*Shusshoö strikes the big gong twice. Servants and musume prepare for the feast.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Ashawara! (*After the tables are arranged, at a gesture from the Prince of Tosan, all take their places at the feast, sitting on their heels on cushions. A full-rigged war-junk is carried on; its sails of pale yellow are inscribed with crimson Japanese characters. The steamers are also filled with Japanese inscriptions. There is an incessant chatter among the guests until the Prince of Tosan speaks.*) Publicly, I wish to honorably acknowledge my debt to the brave Prince Kara, for two lives: my own life and that of the serene Princess Yo-San.

KARA. O noble Prince, I declare all debt between us cancelled.

(*The Prince of Tosan drinks. His cup is then taken to Kara.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. I beg to exchange a cup with you, Prince.

(*Kara drinks from his cup; then offers it with his left hand, trying to take his host's with his right. He drops his hand, a look of pain on his face.*)

TONDA-TANJI (*Aside to Zakkuri*). Look! He is wounded — his arm!

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Who receives Kara's cup from the musume who has filled it*). To your gods, your ancestors, yourself.

KARA. To your gods, your ancestors, yourself.

TONDA-TANJI (*To Zakkuri*). He holds his cup in his left hand . . . watch. . . . Chivalrous Kara, I — (*He pushes Kara's arm.*) Your pardon : I awkwardly touched your arm.

KARA (*Who bites his lip in agony*). I did not observe it. Ah, that hooded mask (*points with his wounded hand at the mask which hangs from Tonda-Tanji's neck*) resembles one I saw a few moments ago. . . . But you are not an assassin — I must be mistaken.

(*Both bow.*)

YO-SAN (*Dressed as a veiled geisha, enters. No one notices her. She is followed by Inu, Kaëde, and Setsu, who are trying to drag her back*). Go away. . . . (*She escapes.*) Inu, keep watch. . . . I want to see. . . . I am a geisha.

ZAKKURI (*Aside to Tonda-Tanji*). There is blood on his cushion. (*To Kara, a saké cup in his hand.*) Allow me to wish you a thousand years on earth.

KARA. No, only to-morrow.

ZAKKURI. Since you insist. (*They exchange cups.*) May you see the sun rise.

KARA. No, only the moon to-night.

(*Yo-San grows bolder, and, half-hidden behind Inu, peeks out at Kara.*)

ZAKKURI. As you are neither a cloud nor a god, whichever way you turn when you leave here . . . death waits.

YO-SAN (*Draws back in fright*). Ah!

KARA. Without a doubt, illustrious Zakkuri, I die to-night.

ZAKKURI. To the present moment, then. . . .

(*They drink.*)

YO-SAN (*Aside to Setsu who reaches for her*). No, no, I want to see this man who is to die.

(*Setsu and Kaëde disappear.*)

KARA. I have chosen my course. Honorably pardon me for believing that there is not one here who does not envy me my swords, though each would loyally strangle me as I sit. (*All are motionless. Suddenly they all blow up a cloud of smoke.*) Aie, I again transgress by saying that in our swords — and only there — lives yet the soul of old Japan for which our ancestors fought and died in a thousand splendid battles. And you — you have flung aside that soul! Why? The Emperor —

ZAKKURI. Celestial Born!

(*All, save Kara, bow.*)

KARA. — commands it at an order from foreign friends he fears. Our country now relies upon the imperial mob of hired defenders. Have the gods seen hired defenders fight as we have fought? I have not. Have the gods seen men protect their women and children without swords? I have not. Why is it wrong that we should wish to die for our country? Why? (*All puff as before.*) Honorably pardon me for believing that when the last of my little band of ten is gone, — others will spring to life. You cannot kill the Samurai — the warrior; he will be re-born to his country which he has loved and defended for twelve thousand great years. Shaka! Shaka! I pledge the war cry of our clan: "For my swords I live — by my swords I die!"

(*He rises.*)

YO-SAN (*Hidden on the balcony, sees him*). Gods, the face in the lantern's light!

KARA (*To the Prince of Tosan*). I have come at your command: I beg to take my swords and go.

(*Shusshoö at a gesture from the Prince of Tosan returns the two swords, which Kara places in his girdle.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Shaimaiyo! Prince Kara, all debt of obligation is paid. I salute you. (*Guests rise. All, save Zakkuri, kowtow. Kara is escorted off with much formality.*) Geisha, geisha — lights. My guest goes forth.

(*As the twelve beautiful geisha with lanterns flutter about Kara, Yo-San joins them.*)

KARA (*Proudly, leaning on his sword to conceal his failing strength*). I claim my right, O Prince, of going in the darkness.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Granted, illustrious Kara. (*Bowing.*) Sayonaraba.

KARA. Sayonaraba.

TONDA-TANJI (*Insolently to Kara — only Yo-San, who kneels between them, overhearing*). The Princess Yo-San has set me a task to-night . . .

KARA. To kill me?

TONDA-TANJI. . . . and to-morrow, when I shall have accomplished it, she will name our wedding day. Drink.

(*Presents a cup which he has carried from the table.*)

KARA (*Waving the cup away*). An outlaw never counts upon the morrow.

TONDA-TANJI. Shall we drink that you may win the face in the lantern's light?

KARA (*Taking a cup*). That you may not!

TONDA-TANJI. Ah! (*Zakkuri claps his hands. He points out Kara to Kugo who enters, followed by his master's spies.*) There is Prince Kara . . . Wait — here is sanctuary. (*Then to Prince Kara.*) Prince Kara, by whichever gate you leave, you must pass Kanzashi Forks. (*Then to the spies.*) Let him vanish there with the mists.

(*Zakkuri bows to Kara; Kara returns the bow. Tonda-Tanji hastens off, followed by his spies. All have left the stage save Yo-San and Kara.*)

YO-SAN. Shaka! They will kill him if he goes.

(*The stage is almost in darkness. The only light comes from Yo-San's lantern and the moon. Kara glances about, then raises his sword on the defensive and starts to go. With a groan of pain he lets his long sword fall.*)

KARA. Ah! I cannot fight. If I must die, it shall be by my own sword.

(*He tries to lift his small sword, but cannot.*)

YO-SAN (*Realizing that he is about to kill himself, grasps his arm*). Kara . . .

KARA (*Seeing her face in the light of her lantern*). Gods!

YO-SAN. Gods! (*After an instant's pause.*) I have given you all my souls — have I yours?

KARA. You had my souls in that flash of light upon Hakoné. (*He drops the lantern which he has taken from her.*)

YO-SAN. Then here in your presence, O my beloved, I kneel with my sandals off — your slave.
(*She bows.*)

KARA (*Staggering*). I am wounded . . .

YO-SAN (*Pityingly*). Ah! (*She gives him her veil to staunch the blood, then suddenly as though hearing something.*) Sh! . . . There is a safe way . . . by the Jizo shrine where women worship . . . the wall is broken. We must go quickly in the dark . . . Come . . . come . . .

KARA (*Sinking down*). I am dying.

YO-SAN. No, no, Kara. . . . (*On her knees beside him with uplifted hands.*) Shaka! (*Inu comes on with a torch.*) Inu?

INU (*With a guttural sound, he points to a curtain on which the shadow of Migaku is seen, a lantern in his hand. He is one of Zakkuri's spies*). Ugh!

YO-SAN. Zakkuri's spy. . . . (*In a half-whisper.*) Put out the lights. (*Inu's torch goes out. They crouch, watching Migaku, waiting until he disappears from the window and presently goes away.*) Take him behind my shoji . . . (*Inu lifts Kara.*) They dare not look for him there. Behind my shoji — he will be safe.

CURTAIN

ACT II

FIRST SCENE: *Kanzashi Forks at the hour of the ox (two o'clock). Within the shadows of the gates. A pass, showing a triangular point of rock which has been hewn out of the side of the hill to form cross roads.*

On a rise of ground is a weather-beaten stone votive lantern, twelve feet high. A watcher stands inside, looking through the opening.

There is a heavy wood at back, in which a few flowers show, phantom-like, in the moonlight. As the scene comes into view, a far-off temple bell proclaims the hour of the ox.

As the curtain goes up, Kugo is kneeling, motionless, his spies stationed in various places. All appear to have been waiting for a long time. Tonda-Tanji is wearily sitting on a stone step.

MAN IN THE LANTERN (*As the bell strikes the hour*). It is the hour of the ox.

TONDA-TANJI. Two o'clock. Shaka, how he lags!

KUGO. All lag on the way to death, young Excellency.

TONDA-TANJI. You in the lantern — no sign of him?

MAN IN THE LANTERN. No sign, Lord.

TONDA-TANJI. And I might be in Geisha Street with my head in a beauty's lap. Beast of an outlaw! This Kara trickles through your fingers like moonlight.

KUGO. But he shall not trickle through this time, young Excellency. As he leaves the Prince of Tosan's yashiki, he must pass through one of four gates.

FIRST RUNNER (*Heard off*). Hai, hai, hai, hai!

MAN IN THE LANTERN. Runner from the eastern gate is coming. (*There is the flicker of a light off.*) He signals that Kara has not passed that gate.

TONDA-TANJI. Yebisu! And I lie here, food for gnats. I shall ask my august uncle to torture him. (*To the Man in the Lantern.*) Is there no sign, Toho?

MAN IN THE LANTERN. There is a mist . . . I cannot see. Wait . . .

TOHO. There is a torch on the road —

SECOND RUNNER (*Heard off*). Hai, hai, hai, hai, hai!

MAN IN THE LANTERN. Runner from the northern gate signals — Kara has not passed.

TONDA-TANJI. Dog!

MAN IN THE LANTERN (*Looking toward the left*). Some one . . .

VOICES OF THE SPIES. Some one . . . some one . . .

(*All stand peering into the darkness.*)

KUGO. Who is it? Who passes?

MAN IN THE LANTERN. The mist . . . (*Turns out his lantern. A pause.*) His Excellency, the Minister of War.

(*Zakkuri enters with a body-guard of four and a man carrying a lantern*).

ZAKKURI (*Looking at the group, coolly*). You are kept waiting?

TONDA-TANJI (*Fanning himself violently*). He has the insolence —

THIRD RUNNER (*In the distance*). Hai, hai, hai!

ZAKKURI. Sssh . . .

MAN IN THE LANTERN. Runner from the Nikko gate. He has not passed.

KUGO. There is but one more gate.

MAN IN THE LANTERN. A runner . . .

ZAKKURI. The last gate.

TONDA-TANJI. The last gate.

(*The flash of a lantern's light is seen off.*)

MAN IN THE LANTERN. He has not passed.

ZAKKURI (*Turning furiously upon Kugo*). Gods! What have you to say?

KUGO. He has slipped out through the mist.

ZAKKURI (*Striking him down, kicking him*). Yebisu, you rat, you twisted back, you worm! Ojin-Tenno protect me . . . for I sent word to the Emperor that I had taken Kara . . . and you lost him for me in the mist. (*Strikes Kugo.*) Jigoku!

MAN IN THE LANTERN. A man comes this way . . .

ZAKKURI. Ah!

TONDA-TANJI. It is he.

ZAKKURI (*To spies*). Be ready.

(*In an instant, the place is apparently deserted.*)

MAN IN THE LANTERN. He runs . . . now he pauses . . .

KUGO. His feet ring unsteadily . . . he comes . . . I see a figure in the mist . . .

ZAKKURI. Ssh . . .

(*Footsteps now heard off right, coming nearer and nearer, — then the heavy breathing of an exhausted man.*)

(*Migaku dashes on, raising his arms as though to shield his*

head. His arms are encased in armor, on which the blows of the spies are heard to ring.)

MIGAKU. Master . . .

(*He falls at Zakkuri's feet.*)

ZAKKURI. 'Tis not Kara. Migaku — speak.

MIGAKU. I am he you set to watch —

ZAKKURI. Yes?

MIGAKU. — the shoji in the palace lest he should —

ZAKKURI. Yes?

MIGAKU. — slink among the shadows —

ZAKKURI. Yes?

MIGAKU. He has not left the yashiki.

ZAKKURI (*His face inscrutable in the moonlight*). Not left the —

TONDA-TANJI. Impossible!

MAN IN THE LANTERN. The gates are closed for the night.

TONDA-TANJI. If the Prince should grant sanctuary beyond the obligation, his life must pay.

KUGO. You lost him, Migaku — you! He left the yashiki. (*To the spies who rush forward.*) Kill him! He lies!

(*As the spies surround Migaku, Zakkuri raises his hand in protest.*)

ZAKKURI. No. No, he does not lie . . . (*To Tonda-Tanji, holding up his finger with a look of cunning.*) Yo-San . . . (*As the scene fades out, Zakkuri remains immovable, smiling, his finger still upraised, repeating.*) Yo-San. . . .

(*When the lights go up again, we see*

SECOND SCENE: *The house of Yo-San among the moon-flowers. The only lights are those burning faintly behind her shoji. A heavy bar, laid across a balustrade, makes the steps to her balcony inaccessible.*

Wistaria and moon-flowers creep up to her shoji. A silvery moon shines on a lotus pond, crossed by a curved bridge.

Inu is seen curled up like a watch-dog on the foot of the steps. The shadow of Yo-San is outlined on the shoji which she cautiously opens, calling softly.

YO-SAN. Inu, see if my father sleeps . . . there is a light across

the court-yard. (*Inu rises and goes off.*) Setsu, bring the incense and place it here. (*Setsu's shadow passes on the shoji.*) We must watch the face that sleeps inside as though dead, and we must pray, pray, always pray.

SETSU. I am afraid. . . .

YO-SAN. Sh . . . Do you wish all our women to hear? . . . Look, look! . . . The balustrade is covered with his blood where Inu carried him in.

SETSU. Aie!

YO-SAN. Bring water.

(*Setsu hastens off.*)

A WATCHMAN (*Entering*). Hi-no-yo-zin-e-no-yo-zin.

(*He carries a lantern and a stick with a chain which he rattles. He crosses the bridge, his cry dying away in the distance.*)

(*Yo-San has shrunk back into the doorway as he passed.*)

YO-SAN. In all these worlds, there are but two things to-night: love and death. (*She kneels.*) O Shaka! whose eyes have seen what I have done, kindly permit that I bring him into my prayer for safety. Do not forget, O Shaka, do not forget, O beautiful Shaka! (*Migaku, Zakkuri's spy, enters. He has been sent back by Zakkuri. He is seen wading across the edge of the pond, and presently steals up to the balcony to peer through the shoji.*) Do not forget, Shaka. . . . And to my thousand ancestors, I say a nembutsu: keep it, keep it, keep it.

MIGAKU (*As he parts and stares through the shoji*). Kara!

(*Yo-San sees Migaku. She knows that he has seen Kara.*)

(*As Migaku steals off the balcony, and runs up to the bridge, he is caught by Inu.*)

INU. Ugh! (*Inu, choking Migaku into silence, stabs him with his own knife, throwing his body into the pool under the bridge. Then, looking off, Inu sees Kugo and Zakkuri approaching.*) Ugh!

(*He crouches beside Yo-San.*)

YO-SAN. Look down quickly, O Shaka, into the yashiki of the Prince of Tosan near Yeddo where I am — and see a small woman who prays to you against the evil that approaches. (*Kugo appears with a lantern.*) Look, look, look. . . .

(*She retreats behind the shoji which she closes. Inu has taken his place on his mat as before.*)

(*Kugo, carrying a lantern, precedes Zakkuri, who has crossed the bridge, followed by Tonda-Tanji and the spies.*)

ZAKKURI (*Taking the lantern from Kugo*). I cannot see . . .

TONDA-TANJI. The palace is in darkness.

ZAKKURI (*To Kugo*). Begin where Kara last stood and follow from there.

(*Kugo takes the lantern and goes off.*)

TONDA-TANJI. We have forced our way past the gateman, Uncle, I am afraid.

ZAKKURI. Pst. . . .

(*Setsu, within, sings softly to the samisen.*)

SETSU. "Nothing ever changèd since the days of the Gods,
Water runs the same, love goes the same."

(*Tonda-Tanji, attracted by the singing, goes toward the shoji and pauses — seeing Inu on the mat.*)

TONDA-TANJI (*Aside to Zakkuri*). Yo-San's slave. . . .

ZAKKURI. Goto, Toho, Kojin, be ready.

SETSU (*Singing*).

"Nothing hence will change until the Gods come again,
Water still shall flow, love still will go — the same."

KUGO (*Returning, throwing the light of his lantern on the ground*). I follow him from where he stood last, across the courtyard . . . sometimes carried . . . sometimes set down — the blood stains show that two walked with him.

TONDA-TANJI. Two?

ZAKKURI. Was one a woman?

KUGO. By the footprints . . . yes.

ZAKKURI. Ah!

KUGO (*Following a trail*). All lead in — none out . . . they stop here. (*He is now in front of Inu.*) See, master?

ZAKKURI. He is there. (*To Kugo.*) Go up. (*Kugo goes in fear. Inu rises in his way.*)

INU. Ugh! (*Retreats a step towards the shoji.*) Ugh!

(*Claps his hands as though to attract the attention of those behind the shoji. The music stops suddenly.*)

ZAKKURI. Go up.

(*Setsu appears.*)

SETSU. Who dares disturb my honorable mistress when I sing the night-song that lulls her to sleep?

ZAKKURI. I look to the safety of your serene mistress . . . There is an outlaw in the yashiki.

SETSU. Aie!

ZAKKURI. His cunning has led him to these rooms, I fear. Beg your mistress to veil her face while my ignominious duty compels me to search.

SETSU. Aie!

(*Disappears, frightened, behind the shoji.*)

ZAKKURI (*To Kugo*). Take down the barrier.

(*As Kugo throws down the bar, Inu darts to the bell which hangs in one corner of the balcony and rings it several times. Voices are heard.*)

(*Lantern bearers, attendants, torch bearers, and maids come running on.*)

ZAKKURI. Inu!
KUGO. Silence! } *Simultaneously.*

PRINCE OF TOSAN'S VOICE (*Off*). Yo-San! . . . (*Inu stops ringing the bell.*) The bell. . . . My daughter. . . .

TONDA-TANJI. Gods, the Prince of Tosan! He is awakened.

(*The Prince of Tosan enters, followed by servants.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. What is it? . . . Yo-San?

TONDA-TANJI. Let us go.

ZAKKURI. Wait. . . .

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Seeing Zakkuri*). What, Zakkuri? Are not my gates closed? Is a Prince no longer safe within his own walls? Sanctuary — you have broken sanctuary. You have stolen like a thief in the night under my daughter's very shoji.

ZAKKURI. Prince of Princes, give me Kara and I will go.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Give you — Is it possible, Zakkuri — you say that I conceal the outlaw?

ZAKKURI. He was here; he has not gone. He was wounded . . . Men do not vanish like mist. Behind the shoji of the

Princess, where the night light burns. . . . (*Pointing.*) I have it in my mind —

(*The Prince holds up his hand to stop Zakkuri. He motions the servants away. They disappear.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. What? What? You dare? Miscreant! You dare cast doubt upon the sanctuary of a veiled and guarded woman. No! To your teeth I give back the shame. A Princess of the House of Tosan sleeps behind these Shoji. . . . Even an outlaw would never violate that place, more sacred than the altars of our gods. The Emperor himself dare not enter unless he first prove his right. (*Standing in place of the barrier, his arms outstretched as though to protect Yo-San — the Prince's hand grasps the railing of the balcony; almost involuntarily he holds up his fingers to see what they have touched, and, as he does so, he notices that they are red with blood.*) Gods. . . .

ZAKKURI (*Throwing the lantern's light on the Prince's hand*). There is my right — that blood upon your hands. In the Emperor's name — (*they bow*) I will enter.

(*The Prince of Tosan gives away, and Zakkuri is about to enter, when Yo-San, in her loose night robe, her hair down and tangled about her face, appears on the balcony as though just awakened.*)

YO-SAN. Father. . . .

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Yo-San!

YO-SAN. Forgive my appearing here . . . no obi . . . (*modestly draws her robe about her as a veil*) no veil . . . but I am much frightened . . . While I slept a man looked through my shoji . . . Inu killed him.

(*Inu holds up the body of Migaku from the pool.*)

INU. Ugh!

(*The water drips from Migaku's face as Kugo throws the light on it.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*To Zakkuri*). Is this one of your spies?

ZAKKURI. He deserved his miserable death — if he were not killed for what he saw.

(*Inu drops Migaku's body into the water.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. The zealous Zakkuri dares to say that an outlaw, Kara, sought shelter behind your shoji : answer.

ZAKKURI. Upon oath — before Shaka !

(*All kowtow, save the Prince, who resents the insult.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Zakkuri !

ZAKKURI. I am but the servant of the Emperor who must have the truth.

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*To Yo-San*). Before Shaka !

(*All kowtow.*)

YO-SAN (*Who has motioned to Setsu to bring incense*). Before Shaka, god of life and death, to whom my word goes up on this incense, I swear, hanging my life on the answer, I have not seen this Kara. (*Simply.*) With much shame, I ask : how could I — since I am dressed for sleep ?

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Stands looking at Zakkuri*). You hear. . . .

ZAKKURI. Lord of Tosan, I was too zealous for the Emperor. (*Fawningly to Yo-San.*) May the gods give you good sleep.

(*He goes, followed by Tonda-Tanji and his spies.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. My daughter, may the goddess of pleasant dreams visit you.

(*He disappears.*)

YO-SAN (*Without moving, wiping the tears from her impassive face*). It is better to lie — a little — than to be unhappy much.

CURTAIN

ACT III

Forty days later, behind the shoji of Yo-San's sanctuary.
"The Fate Hour."

SCENE : *The room contains a shrine to Buddha in an alcove with kneeling-cushions and incense. In the Tokonoma and on the shrine are Kaimyo made of ivory containing Japanese lettering. A small breakfast table is centre and on it a teapot, bowls and chop-sticks. Kneeling-cushions are right and left of it. The shoji are closed, the sunlight giving them a pink tinge.*

Yo-San and Kara are at breakfast, sitting on the cushions on the floor. His arm is in a sling made of a large handkerchief. Yo-San, in an attitude of abandon, is reading a red book. Setsu, kneeling and bowing low, holds out a bowl and a pair of chop-sticks. Inu, kneeling and bowing, holds out the teapot and a cup. Both have the air of being resigned to Yo-San's romance, but not approving of it.

YO-SAN (*Reading*).

"In the clouds there is a lady,
Mother, is it you?
In the clouds there is a soldier,
Father, is it you?
In the clouds there is a lover,
Is it — is it — you?"

SETSU (*Holding out a dish*). The fish is cold, exalted Princess.

YO-SAN. Yes. (*Setsu sets down the dish.*) Strange how much to our liking are the things in this learned Am-er-i-kin red book . . . the embraces with arms and — (*Looking at Setsu.*) Be pleased to turn away your head, Setsu. (*Inu reaches between the lovers, the kettle in his hand. Gesturing to Inu to turn away his eyes, she illustrates the meaning of the American kiss.*) Those kisses. . . . Is it not worth a little lie to my father, — this honorable intimacy with you?

KARA. My darling of the gods, Buddha has forgiven it.

SETSU (*Sniffs*). Aie!

INU. Ugh!

YO-SAN. Never once did you peek while I was being painted and arrayed. Your manners are perfect, so are mine. (*To Setsu.*) Say so.

SETSU. Your much exalted father — (*all bow*) is long away on a mission for the Celestial Emperor. Kaëde, teacher of manners, is ill and gone back to her people. Some one must say these kisses and embraces are not decorous.

(*Bows to the floor.*)

INU. Ugh!

YO-SAN. Do the gods say so? Why am I left in this sweet peace?

SETSU. I arranged this sweet peace by giving out that you were doing penance for your august father's — (*all bow*) safe return, — not for this.

YO-SAN. How sweetly you lie. (*To Kara.*) Say so.

SETSU. Inu, keep watch. Shaka, these days are full of fears and terrors. (*Inu rises and goes up to the shoji of the outer room.*) The rice is quite cold and worthless, Waga Kimi.

YO-SAN. I do not care for rice. Immediately my eyes saw you, Kara, I promised myself to marry you.

KARA. It was a vast happiness to me.

(*In the distance, a song is heard to a stringed instrument. Kara and Yo-San speak through it.*)

"O floats our boat
Upon the moat,
Tori,
Tontorori!

"The moon up there
The moon down here,
Tontori,
Tontorori!

"Or is it sea or is it sky?
The heavens or earth?
Gods! Care not I!
Upon my breast your head . . . you sigh.
Tontorori!"

YO-SAN. I am glad that I gave up twenty lovers for you.

KARA. Twenty!

SETSU. Aie, no, no!

YO-SAN. Oh yes. The night you came, beloved, I had decided to lead the beautiful life of a courtezan.

KARA. What?

YO-SAN. For one night, at least; for I gathered that I would be nobly dedicated to love.

KARA. Oh! . . . The gods adore you as I do! They have made you to misunderstand.

YO-SAN. We shall be exquisitely happy when we are married. I shall wear dark clothes and always meet you at the gates with kisses and all my children will be yours.

KARA. Yo-San, Yo-San . . . your lips are more perilous than a thousand enemies.

(*Touches her hair.*)

YO-SAN. Let us read again of this new thing — love. (*Looking in the book.*) To what extent, my beloved, do you love me?

KARA. Is that question in the book, delicious one?

YO-SAN (*Motioning to Setsu*). Pst! (*As Setsu turns away.*) No.

KARA. To the extent, my Princess, of the witchery of the moon, the mist on the brooks, the foaming seas.

YO-SAN. Not enough.

SETSU. Aie!

YO-SAN. The book says so.

KARA. The book is very hard to please. (*Imitating her.*) Say so.

YO-SAN. I make this the extent of my love: I add gold and silver fishes and give back to you your moon and brook.

KARA. Not enough.

YO-SAN. Hai! Hai! (*Clapping her hands, laughing.*) Take all the tiniest child fishes too, then.

KARA. Not enough, my lady of delight.

YO-SAN. Exacting Prince of splendors, I add a mountain made of all the petals of all the blossoms of all the cherry trees in all the worlds. Even more: on top of that, I set a volcano with its glittering eye.

KARA. Still not enough.

YO-SAN. Oh, I have confined our love to the things of this one little life, when the next one is, perhaps, three hundred times longer.

KARA. Things of this world all wait their fate hour.

YO-SAN. Aie, I do not like that fate hour.

KARA. By Shaka, by beautiful death, by all the lives that follow until the worlds in which we shall live pile up —

YO-SAN. Like Fujiyama —

KARA. I shall love you.

YO-SAN. But after that?

KARA. There is a sleep in Shaka's bosom that follows after the last death, where there is no love, no sudden beatings of the heart, nor anything but rest, peace, sleep.

YO-SAN. I would not have that sleep. Let us put off that solemn rest on Shaka's bosom by not being too perfect.

SETSU. Aie!

YO-SAN. Oh, take me in your arms in this small sweet life. I give you all my souls.

SETSU (*Aghast*). Aie! She has given away her souls — she will turn into a fox-woman. (*Taking hold of Yo-San's kimono, trying to pull the lovers apart.*) Mistress!

YO-SAN (*Pulling back her kimono*). Yebisu, such manners! (*Noticing that Kara's arm is out of the sling.*) Aie, your arm . . .

KARA. It is healed. All my wounds are healed. I am strong — well. I can swing my swords again.

(*Inu enters, goes behind the screen and returns with Kara's swords.*)

YO-SAN. Ah no, your arm is not well. You wish to go.

(*Inu places Kara's swords on the writing-table and leaves the room.*)

KARA. In honor, I must go soon.

YO-SAN. And leave me?

KARA. I must, unwillingly.

YO-SAN. Not caring if we never meet?

KARA. That is for the gods.

YO-SAN. Aie, that is the end of love whose other name is "good-bye." You have forgotten that my throat is a white snow-drift of poppies — you said so that evening we watched the moon smile when we first tried those kisses. . . . There is nothing to remember, go.

KARA. Would you keep me from my duty — my sworn purpose — my companions?

YO-SAN. Yes, my dear lord and master, yes, if all the world must die for it, I would keep you — yes.

KARA. Yet I must go. I am a Samurai. To him, there is but one word, honor.

YO-SAN. May Inu secretly take a message to you? Every day? August Lord, every day?

KARA. Let him leave word at the place where he took the message for my followers. One of us will find the message in passing.

YO-SAN. But I wish him to see you where you are; I wish him to speak with you, to touch you, to know that you are well and safe and still love me.

KARA. Put the lives of my ten men in his hands! . . .

YO-SAN. You do not trust us . . . Have we betrayed you?

KARA (*Calls*). Inu, the inkstone.

(*Inu enters, gets the tray containing the knife, brush, inkstone, and parchment, and kneels before Kara, who, using his left hand, draws brushes over the inkstone and writes.*)

KARA. In the heart of the red bamboo forest, passing the Daimyo tombs, down the long rock steps, to the abandoned shrine of Kwannon— (*He pauses, speaks.*) Here my ten gather at the dusk hour to pray. (*He writes again.*) Let him always face the cleft in the Mogi Mountain. There is no path. (*Inu puts back the writing materials and goes out.*) He must not come often. The way through the marshes is sometimes death.

YO-SAN (*Giving Kara the parchment*). No, take it back. I will not think of you in that strange, awful place — I cannot. (*She takes up the red book.*) Let us sublimely put aside these perils. Considerately cast your honorable eyes on the red book.

(*She opens the book in front of Kara as Inu clinks Kara's swords to attract his attention.*)

KARA (*Holds out his hands for the swords*). Setsu, what day is this?

YO-SAN. Aie, now he commences . . . Did I not tell you yesterday?

KARA (*Rising*). Gentle Yo-San, I am fed on honeyed lies. I believe that I lay here ill, lost in fever, far longer than you

say. . . . Banza . . . Comrades . . . What do you think of me?

SETSU (*Aside to Yo-San*). Another arrow came for him at daybreak . . . That same name was fastened to it.

(*She hands Yo-San a bit of parchment.*)

YO-SAN (*Reading the name*). "Banza" . . . Another answer to Kara's message . . . That name comes singing through the air to call him back — Banza . . . I hate the sound of it.

KARA. Yo-San.

YO-SAN (*Starts guiltily, hiding the paper behind her*). Yes, Lord.

KARA. All day I have had it in my heart to go. Honor has a voice that rings like a trumpet in the night.

YO-SAN. A little longer, lord of my heart, my soul, my souls!

KARA. How many days have passed since I was brought in behind these shoji?

YO-SAN. A little longer, lord of — say — but two days.

KARA. Oh!

YO-SAN. Four days, then.

KARA. Setsu. (*Setsu comes forward timidly.*) How long?

SETSU. August Prince, I think to-day is Friday.

YO-SAN. You think too rapidly. It is earlier — Monday.

KARA. Yo-San, answer.

YO-SAN (*Frightened*). It is set out on the tablet of time, my lord and master.

KARA. Give me the tablet.

(*Setsu gets a calendar.*)

YO-SAN. Aie! He takes such beautiful moments as we have had and calls them days, hours. Aie! They will look longer than they are.

KARA (*Who has taken the tablet from Setsu — counting*). Forty days . . . Shaka!

YO-SAN. Ah, no, beloved, it is still the night you came.

KARA. Forty days. . . . And my men. . . . Inu! (*Inu steps into the room from the balcony.*) Are you sure you took my message to the Daimyo tombs? (*Inu bows.*) You hid it where I told you? (*Inu bows again and goes to the balcony.*) They know that I live . . . They know that I am here . . .

What do they think delays me? Gods, what a leader! Forty days . . . no signal from them in all that time. They are gone, trapped, dead. Zakkuri has taken them. Yo-San, at the turning of the fever, I thought I heard our signal? You said it was a dream. Was it? Was it?

YO-SAN. What was the signal?

KARA. The cry of the Chida bird, heard only on nights of great moons, sad and mournful.

SETSU (*Starts, coming forward*). Oh!

YO-SAN (*Pulls Setsu's dress to caution her to be silent*). It was a dream.

(*Setsu leaves the room.*)

KARA. There has been no arrow such as we send to those in hiding?

YO-SAN. No. Your men are dead; you too are dead; I will be dead also. The miserable world has forgotten us. Let us forget the —

(*An arrow is shot through the paper shoji, a bit of parchment fastened to it. Yo-San gets it and puts it behind her.*)

KARA. Hai! Yo-San! (*She comes to him slowly and gives the arrow to him. He pulls off the parchment and reads. Yo-San drops to the floor on her knees. Kara's face is drawn in rage.*) It was not a dream. My men crept in desperation to the very shadow of this guarded yashiki. . . . (*Holding out the parchment on the arrow.*) This is the fourth arrow they have sent to call me back . . . and you said there was no signal.

YO-SAN. I did it undutifully, Lord, to keep you a little longer.

KARA. Shaka! They know that I am held by a woman, yet they do not reproach me . . . Reads: "We wait, we trust, come." . . . And you kept the arrows. . . . I have lain here at a woman's feet as men lie at the feet of courtezans. My name is something to whisper in the dark. . . . Banza, the same sword has wounded us both: what do you think of me? Nagoya, you who bathed my wounds and forgot your own: what do you think of me? And you, little Sano, carrying the samisen on your back as we fight, singing songs

of war and songs — (*halting, then brokenly*) of honor that never let us forget we are gentlemen of Japan. . . . Gods! Gods! Gods! What do you all think of me, leaderless ones? While you face death, I linger behind a woman's shoji. . . . Inu, help me — I go.

(*Inu, with a look of satisfaction, gets Kara's mail.*)

YO-SAN (*Clinging to his robe, grovelling*). No, I fear the danger for you . . . I am afraid of the swords, the savage faces, the fighting. Do not go.

KARA. I must.

YO-SAN. No. . . .

KARA. I go now.

YO-SAN. Aie! . . . Lord, one minute, wait — I ask only till to-morrow.

KARA. Oh!

YO-SAN. My father will come back to his yashiki in twenty days. Before that time, I had hopes . . . one night when all the stars were hid by clouds . . . we would go out, we two, to some far land. No . . . I see that it is not for miserable me. Augustly wait till to-morrow and you shall go without one little word from me . . . and should you want to see my unimportant face again, I will go to you to that strange awful meeting place of many dangers. Then when my father comes, I will be outcast, too. They will put a tablet for me at that shrine beside my mother's . . . There will be no dear death-name for me like hers. (*Bowing to the shrine.*) O mother, spirit of love: do you see me now, who knew you but an hour? If what I do is wrong, send me a sign that I may obey. No, I could not, — it is too late. (*She sinks down on the mat, prostrate.*) . . . Wait till to-morrow, Lord. (*Cries.*)

KARA. My poor Yo-San: such as my life is, in spite of its shame, keep it till to-morrow.

YO-SAN. Lord, you will stay — say so. Ah, you were almost gone. Hai, hai! (*Half laughing, sighing in relief, she lights his pipe.*) I am like a happy carp in my lotus pond. I am like a very pleasant field of iris. You will stay, lord, you will

stay. . . . Hai, hai! I will sing. I will make you beautifully happy — till to-morrow. A little song — it is in the red book. It is about love. (*Sings gaily.*)

"There are fleet loves and sweet loves
And loves of all seasons, and loves without reasons,
And great love like mine,
When the heart aches, the heart breaks
That vows can be slighted when love has been plighted . . .
Red roses will never make wine."

(*A long pause. She looks at him; then making up her mind that his thoughts are far away, she gets his swords and, with patient sadness, gives them to him.*) To-night, lord, go to-night.

(*Kara takes the swords, overjoyed, and leaves the room.*)

SETSU (*Darting in through the partly opened shoji*). Tonda-Tanji! The yashiki is full of his men.

TONDA-TANJI (*Heard outside*). Honorable greetings.

(*He tosses lotus flowers through the shoji.*)

SETSU. He dares to throw lotuses into your very room.

TONDA-TANJI. What can so occupy the gracious moon-flower that she walks no more in her hidden iris garden when the moon is out? (*Yo-San holds up a finger to Setsu as though to say "he knows."*) . . . Prayer?

YO-SAN (*Taking Setsu's place near the half-closed shoji*). Oh yes.

TONDA-TANJI. You have not forgotten your promise? — When I kill Kara, you will marry me.

YO-SAN. Have you captured him? (*Aside.*) Kill Kara. . . .

TONDA-TANJI. Everything is won by waiting.

YO-SAN. Oh yes. (*Aside.*) Kill Kara . . . Kill Kara . . .

TONDA-TANJI (*In a soft insinuating voice*). I see another arrow passed through your shoji, there where it is torn. . . . You do not answer. Are you still praying?

YO-SAN. I am still praying.

SETSU. He has seen the arrows. He is spying.

TONDA-TANJI (*Sings to the instrument he carries*).

"In the spring, a maiden wonders"

KAGO MEN (*Off, in the distance*). Aie, aie, aie, aie!

TONDA-TANJI. My venerable august Aunt Chidori approaches. (*He continues singing.*)

"Why she has no nest and wings."

SETSU. Chidori with the needle eyes.

YO-SAN. He has sent her. Sh . . . Open the shoji. . . .

(*Yo-San goes into the next room to warn Kara, and presently she enters, directing Setsu to arrange cushions for a visit. She then goes to a chest, picks up the arrow which Kara has thrown down, tosses it back of the screen. Taking a small piece of paper, she wipes her tears away, and darts into the alcove. As Setsu opens the shoji, the view discloses the veranda beyond the shoji and a balcony thick with moon-flowers. The Kago men are coming nearer. A runner is heard off, crying: "Way for the beautiful old one, Chidori" — and Chidori arrives, carried across the balcony in an old-style Kago. She is a white-headed, garrulous old woman with a drawn face, peering eyes, and an expressionless smile. While two Kago men hold her up, her fat old maid kneels to take off her sandals. All kowtow. Yo-San comes out from the recess in a kimono of state and bows to the floor.*)

CHIDORI. Kinnichi wa! Flower of an august root, the mighty gods guard you — (*all kowtow again*) and teach you your duty to their favorites, the old.

YO-SAN. I break my bones to you, beautiful old one.

(*All bow. Setsu moves a small screen from the alcove so that Yo-San may sit and not be seen by Tonda-Tanji.*)

(*Inu has entered and stands between the shoji and the next room as though on guard.*)

CHIDORI. I give you leave. Let it be double bowing.

(*Sinks to her knees — kowtows. As Chidori sits, Yo-San sits. The Kago men squat out on the balcony, paying no attention to the conversation.*)

TONDA-TANJI (*Aside to one of his retainers*). If he is here, Chidori will find it out.

CHIDORI. So it has come to this in these tempo days, that the

old (*all kowtow*) must seek the young . . . The sea goes back to the spring.

YO-SAN. I am miserably sorry, august ancient one. (*All bow.*)

CHIDORI. One sorrow effaces the sin of three years, — so says Buddha. Moreover, yamato-faced Princess, vexation feeds upon our fat and leaves us wrinkles. Remember even a devil is pretty at eighteen. (*Pointing with her closed fan.*) Aie, keep that gnat off me. (*Her maid goes to catch the gnat.*) Nay, kill it not, — it may be your brother's soul.

MAID (*Bows twice to the floor, rubbing her hands in prayer, murmuring*). Nembutsu . . . nembutsu . . .

TONDA-TANJI (*Outside, singing*).

"In the spring a maiden" —

CHIDORI. Pst! Would you sing uninvited in the presence of your unmatched aunt? Oh, these tempo days!

TONDA-TANJI. I listen to the advice of the most august aged one this side of the immaculate last heaven. (*All kowtow.*)

CHIDORI (*Annoyed*). I am not a thousand yet — I still have my charms for the wise-eyed. The flame may be out, but the wick remains.

YO-SAN (*Wearily and dutifully*). Beautiful aunt. . . .

CHIDORI. Is your honorable health good?

YO-SAN. Oh yes.

CHIDORI. Do you hear from your honorable absent father — (*kowtows*) that his august health is good?

YO-SAN. Oh yes.

CHIDORI. Does he come back soon?

YO-SAN. Twenty days — when we heard last.

CHIDORI. Did he tell you by the barbarous tel-e-graph?

YO-SAN. Yes.

CHIDORI. Is your maid's health usually good, the excellent idler? (*Setsu kowtows to the floor.*)

YO-SAN. Yes.

CHIDORI. Are all your servants healthy?

YO-SAN. I have not been informed otherwise.

CHIDORI. Are all your relatives healthy? Do they all sleep well?

YO-SAN. I honorably hope so.

CHIDORI. What do you think of my nephew? Is he very accomplished concerning things which please women? Aie? . . . He will surprise you one day.

YO-SAN (*Aside to Setsu behind her*). She means — he will kill Kara.

CHIDORI. He is capable of anything as men go. They are not what they were. Oh, these tempo days! Why, it is nothing for a man to own eighty women besides his wife — eighty! I would like to see the man who could keep me in his yashiki with eighty other women!

TONDA-TANJI "In the springtime oft it happens,
Men to maidens" —

CHIDORI. Your venerable aunt is trying to speak. (*Tonda-Tanji subsides.*) Aie! What a pretty — (*She reaches for the handkerchief which Kara has used for a sling. It is lying on the mat. Both Yo-San and Setsu try to get it; but Chidori snatches it up.*) It looks like a bandage . . . (*Yo-San starts to take it from her.*) Permit me to accept it. Arigato. (*At that moment the distant sound of death's-head drums is heard and a crier passes unseen across the yashiki as though escorted by Zakkuri's guard.*)

CRIER. "Decree! Decree of the illustrious Zakkuri! A price on the head of the outlaw Kara is proclaimed in the name of the Heaven-Born!"

(*All bow.*)

(*The Crier's voice dies away in the distance.*)

YO-SAN (*Impassively*). Will you augustly smoke?

CHIDORI. I will. (*Her maid hands her a pipe.*) Touching that outlaw edict proclaimed outside, is it not a miracle that this Kara should go up like smoke? Do you know the proverb: "The darkest place is just beneath the candlestick"? (*Puffs.*) Some say he is still hidden here: what do you say?

YO-SAN. Impossible! He would have to come out for food and water.

CHIDORI. O-Dei, the Nokodo's daughter hid a man in her rooms. Of course she killed herself when they took him. What else could she do?

YO-SAN. Of course.

CHIDORI. By that reprehensible act, she lost her people and her death-name. Moreover, she made herself unknown in all the heavens, and she was too evil for any of our hells. Kowakatta! Her body was given to the foxes; her house was deserted; through the rotting shoji, one could see the gnawing rats pull down the empty walls.

YO-SAN (*Placidly smiling*). Is it so?

CHIDORI. I transgress by a long visit. (*Calls.*) Ito! Imoduke! Sleeping devils — what are you doing? (*Bowing, the Kago men aid her.*) I bid you excellent good day. May the gods smile on you, but be sure your souls can always smile back. (*Yo-San bows. To Tonda-Tanji as she reaches him.*) He is here. . . . Sayonara! Yeroshi!

(*She is carried off, murmuring "Kitsu, kitsu, kitsu."*)

(*Yo-San points to the shoji. Inu runs up to close it.*)

YO-SAN. Setsu, she knows . . . she knows. . . . Inu, keep watch.

(*Kara, wearing his mail and helmet, carrying his two swords, enters.*)

TONDA-TANJI (*Stepping into the space before Inu can close the shoji, but too polite to look into a lady's room*). Princess, my uncle has given me a hundred of his new musket men; they are near. But I do not wish to kill the illustrious Kara — I wish to take him alive.

YO-SAN. Ah?

TONDA-TANJI. When I capture him, I will toss his sleeve against your shoji.

(*Disappears. Inu closes the shoji.*)

YO-SAN. Aie!

KARA (*Taking Yo-San in his arms*). Sayonara.

YO-SAN. You heard . . . Zakkuri. . . .

KARA. If I am taken, it must not be here to shame you.

(*He starts to go.*)

YO-SAN. Six minutes . . . One hour . . . Gods, one moment.

KARA. Yo-San, Yo-San, I must go. . . . Inu shall show you the way to the shrine of Kwannon. . . . May Buddha guard you until I see your face again . . . and if we never meet —

(*Yo-San helplessly wipes the tears away with the sleeve of her kimono.*)

YO-SAN. No, no, we must meet again. (*As they embrace and kiss, the Prince of Tosan enters.*) Shaka, my father!

PRINCE OF TOSAN. You have been here in my daughter's sanctuary . . . you have been here. . . . Permit me. (*He takes the short sword from Kara and, reversing it, offers it to him. Kara takes it, flinging down the sheath. Prince of Tosan takes the long sword, flings away the scabbard and pulls up his sleeve. To Yo-San.*) Bare your neck. (*Yo-San kneels and obeys. To Kara.*) There was a debt between us, which now is cancelled ; there was a bond of honor which now I break. . . . I am disgraced, destroyed. My daughter and I will follow you. Nothing else is possible. . . . We are waiting for your death.

KARA (*Who has tucked the sleeves of his kimono out of the way and mechanically felt the edge of his sword*). She is not to die.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Do you say you have not made a wanton of my daughter?

KARA. I say that I have not.

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*To Yo-San*). Do you say it?

YO-SAN. I never heard that word before, my father.

(*Kowtows.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN (*Dragging her to the shrine*). Say "no" upon your mother's Kaimyo . . . She is looking into your soul. Dare to swear before her that you are pure.

YO-SAN. O, reverend Father : (*takes the Kaimyo*) O dear, dead Mother : I am pure.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Yebisu!

(*As she holds the Kaimyo in her arms, he strikes her down and raises the sword over her.*)

KARA (*Cutting down the sword in the Prince's hand*). Outrager of hospitality that I am, O Prince, I fight for honor. I do not take it. I should have gone, but I loved her. By the gods, she kneels before you as pure as the mother whose tablet she holds. Mighty Prince of Tosan, we do not fight to-day, there is no cause.

PRINCE OF TOSAN. I find you in her sanctuary . . . I find you here. It is enough! Shaka! Strike to kill, strike to kill, strike, I say, strike!

(*The Prince has attacked Kara, who parries his mad thrusts, refusing to fight. Shouts are heard outside. Drums.*)

KARA. I will not fight. Strike!

(*He stands undefended before the Prince. At the sound of the drums, the Prince pauses.*)

VOICE OF THE CRIER (*Outside*). "Decree of the Illustrious Zakkuri! A price on the head of the outlaw Kara! Proclaimed, proclaimed in the name of" —

(*The Prince of Tosan goes to the shoji and, throwing them open, raises his arm commandingly.*)

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Kara! Kara! (*Shouts are heard. The Prince of Tosan, turning to Kara, points off.*) Go.

(*Hands him his sword.*)

YO-SAN. Father, it is death. . . .

PRINCE OF TOSAN. Go. (*To Yo-San.*) Sleep no more beneath my roof — outcast!

(*The Prince of Tosan leaves the room.*)

KARA. If I live, Yo-San, come to me the third day . . . I will wait for you at the shrine of Kwannon. Sayonara.

(*He steps quietly out of her arms, leaving them outstretched and empty.*)

YO-SAN. Kara. . . . Oh no, no. . . . It is death out there.

(*Kara disappears. Setsu closes the shoji. Outside, cries and sounds indicate Kara's desperate fight against clubs and missiles. Yo-San runs to the shoji and, with a thrust of her fist, makes a hole in it, then sinks down, dishevelling her hair, tearing her kimono.*)

TONDA-TANJI (*Heard outside*). Yo-San! . . . Yo-San! . . .

He is taken. (*Throws Kara's sleeve into the room through the hole in the shoji.*) I remind you of your promise.

YO-SAN (*Picking up the sleeve, throws it out, screaming*). I throw it in your face! (*Turning for the first time, showing her distorted face and dishevelled hair.*) Shaka! Shaka! Shaka!

(*She falls to the floor, lying motionless.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

The old sword room: the cabinet of the Minister of War.
Later in the same day.
"Nothing for nothing is given here."

SCENE: *A large room with lacquered walls and ceiling; dark, yet livid in aspect. The floor is lacquered in black. A large double door at back is reached by a flight of four or five steps. A splendid corridor lies beyond the door. There is a large window in the corridor, sashed and filled, shoji-like, with translucent decorated paper. There are several doors in the cabinet — one leading to Zakkuri's apartments. Zakkuri's desk is placed on a platform at the left of the room. A trapdoor is set in this platform; when opened, it enables Zakkuri to see what is going on below. Two desks for the Secretaries stand behind Zakkuri's; they contain inkstones, brushes, and scrolls. Down right is a large, thick trapdoor. A massive figure of Ojin Tenno, the war god, is at the right of the room, a number of swords and standards (taken from the Samurai) piled at its feet; incense in vases and bowls of rice are added to the offerings.*

Zakkuri is discovered, standing; a large candle shines from over his left shoulder on his desk and papers. Four spies are sitting at the back, in a horizontal line. Two runners sit up near the door at left with the characteristic handkerchiefs around their heads.

Ato is seated behind the war god, unseen by the others. The First Secretary is writing. The Second Secretary is kowtowing low before Zakkuri, holding out a scroll for his approval and

signature. Zakkuri is the picture of serene satisfaction as he reads the scroll.

ZAKKURI. Who is passing?

GOTO (*In the doorway*). The Minister of Imperial Internal Affairs.

ZAKKURI. Does he go toward the palace of the Emperor?

GOTO. Yes, high Lord.

ZAKKURI. He schemes and works against me, now that I have taken Kara. He is jealous of the favors showered upon me by the Emperor. He goes to make light of my triumph. Zuké, follow; observe who enters and leaves the palace. (*Zuké hastens off. The Second Secretary wraps and hands the scroll to the First Runner who hastens away. To the Second Runner.*) Did you see the Prince of Tosan?

SECOND RUNNER. The palace is closed, — the amado drawn. No one has seen his face since Kara was taken in the yashiki.

ZAKKURI. So. . . . Do the people evince enthusiasm over my capture?

SECOND RUNNER. Yes, Lord, — to our faces; behind our backs, they have the effrontery to admire this outlaw.

ZAKKURI. They should have their heads off. Have some of my new musket-men walk about among them . . . unconcernedly. (*The Second Runner kowtows and goes off. To a spy.*) Kojin, to the Shin-Yashiwara — the House of the Seven Silver Carp. Tell Madame Asani to come here with her geisha. Let her be more delicately painted. Convey the impression that I am more difficult to please than yesterday. . . . (*Kojin disappears. Zakkuri opens the small trap-door in his platform, a ray of light comes up.*) Kugo? . . . (*Four guards enter, following a Captain. They are escorted in by the Second Runner. Zakkuri takes up the scroll, smiling as he begins to read it again.*) "The Heaven-born Emperor of everlasting great Nippon observes with applauding eyes that the swords of Kara are in the hands of Zakkuri" — show them to Ojin Tenno, my sublime war god. (*The First Secretary takes the two swords and lifts them up to the*

god, as Zakkuri kowtows three times.) Now lay them at his feet with all the others. Incense. (*Incense is presently put before Ojin Tenno.*) The Emperor has smiled upon me for the first time in thirty days. It would be my life's triumph if I had all Kara's ten men. I am feeding spies who have never seen the shadows of these outlaws. Yebisu! Suddenly one day, the spot on which you now sit, will be vacant. (*The spies are panic-stricken as they rise and bow.*) Kugo?

KUGO (*From below*). Illustrious Zakkuri called?

ZAKKURI. Did you convey to Kara the assurance of my high esteem?

KUGO. Yes, Lord.

ZAKKURI. And how miserably I regret having him confined under my contemptible official roof?

KUGO. Yes, Lord.

ZAKKURI. And did you intimate that I would grant him honorable respite if his ten men gave me their swords?

KUGO. Yes, master.

ZAKKURI. What did he say?

KUGO. He laughed.

ZAKKURI. He laughed? (*Enraged, he closes the door in his platform. Unconsciously, he looks toward his Secretaries; both leave, taking their desks with them.*) Devils! Birds of the air! Yebisu!

(*Tonda-Tanji, gaily dressed, enters singing.*)

TONDA-TANJI. "In the spring a maiden wonders"

ZAKKURI. Sh!

TONDA-TANJI (*Kowtows*). Kara pays with his life to-day, while the world fawns upon my courage, — proclaims me magnificent.

ZAKKURI. The world is a liar. I gave you a hundred men to capture him.

TONDA-TANJI. The Princess Yo-San has thrown her promise in my face.

ZAKKURI. Would you marry this soiled woman?

TONDA-TANJI. Of course, exalted Uncle.

ZAKKURI. Shaka! When a princess falls, a princess who has

danced in the temple before the gods, it is as though the Sun Goddess had herself fallen. Yo-San has been driven from her father's house, an outcast. (*Rises.*) Sh . . . The Minister of Imperial Internal Affairs returns. . . . (*Military music is heard off.*) He has not been received by the Emperor to laugh at my triumph. (*Calls off.*) Rockets. More lights! (*Rockets and colored lights go up.*) Now I laugh — and none too soon. Had I failed to take Kara, I had certain subtle hints that I should go as others before me, quickly, silently. . . .

(*Military music is still heard as Zakkuri's enemy returns.*)

SHIBA (*Entering hurriedly, bows*). High Lord, all is consternation in the palace.

ZAKKURI. What? What is this?

SHIBA. The outlaws have sent an arrow within the imperial walls. They demand Kara — threatening the Emperor's sacred life.

ZAKKURI. Shaka! Jigoku!

(*Shiba goes.*)

TONDA-TANJI. Uncle, the Emperor will look to you, his War Minister, to deliver his enemies. Gods, if you should fail!

ZAKKURI. That is the tragedy of success ; one dare not afford to fail. . . . Tcho! Goto! Send to the imperial palace gates — gather news quickly.

(*Tcho and Goto, who have run in, now hasten away.*)

TONDA-TANJI. Gods, make this Kara tell where his men are hidden.

(*The Second Runner enters, followed by spies, runners and Taro — the latter a rough-looking man, travel-stained.*)

SECOND RUNNER. Excellency, a capture by Taro.

SPIES AND RUNNERS. A capture . . . A capture . . . Yes, Lord.

TARO (*Comes forward, bowing*). Kato, a carp fisher . . . I took him by the Bay of Monkeys on the Inland Sea. He has given food to Kara's men.

ZAKKURI. Have you questioned him?

TARO. He says that he has never seen them.

(*Tcho enters, falls prostrate.*)

ZAKKURI. Of course. Ato, bring Kara. (*Ato goes out.*) Zuké, keep the fisherman outside until I want him. Taro, remain. Tcho, have that door left open. . . . Watch.

(*Tcho opens a door. Kara enters, brought in by two half-naked, tattooed coolies. Zakkuri bows to Kara with profound ceremony and motions to the coolies to let their captive go free.*)

SPIES (*Murmuring at the sight of Kara*). Kara . . . Kara . . .

ZAKKURI. Pst! . . . Will you be seated?

KARA. I will stand.

ZAKKURI. Be seated, I beg.

KARA. I will stand.

ZAKKURI. Then I must stand in order not to be impolite.

(*He is assisted to rise by his two Secretaries.*)

TONDA-TANJI (*Aside to Kara*). "The face in the lantern's light" is in black disgrace. I go to demand my betrothal scroll. Dog!

(*He leaves the room.*)

ZAKKURI. Permit me to ask, do you know Kato, a fisher of carp by the Inland Sea. . . . Well? The honorable Kara is not certain. Bring Kato.

TARO (*At the door*). Hai! Kato!

KARA. It is needless . . . I do not know him.

(*Kato enters, brought forward by Taro. He is a simple, sunburned fisherman, very much frightened. He carries an oar over his shoulder and on it hangs a basket of silver carp.*)

ZAKKURI. Come forward.

(*Kato comes down, bowing to Zakkuri; sees Kara's face, drops his oar and basket and falls to his knees in front of Kara.*)

KATO. Daimyo!

ZAKKURI. Aha! You do not know him?

KARA. The outlaw knows no one, Zakkuri. His friendship is too costly.

KATO. August master, this is a dreadful place. Gods, what I have heard and seen!

KARA. Courage, Kato.

ZAKKURI. Kato, you know Prince Kara?

KATO. I am a fisher of the Inland Sea.

ZAKKURI. Answer. (*Kato is silent.*) Do you sell him food?

KATO. No, I give it. I bring them my best silver carp because I —

ZAKKURI. Them? You mean his ten Samurai?

KATO (*After looking at Kara*). No . . . I do not know them.

ZAKKURI. I perceive you are one of those to whom the Samurai are still a creed . . . you would give them your souls. Answer.

KATO. Yes, most high Excellency. I have been taught to love the Samurai. We poor fishers believe them to be the last flash of the old glory of our Japan.

KARA. Kato!

KATO. Was I wrong, Daimyo? Was I —

KARA. Kato, I —

ZAKKURI. Turn his back. (*The men turn Kara's back to Kato.*) As your father was a Samurai, so are you at heart. It is always so. It is in the blood. You cannot deceive me. . . . Where, Kato, did you last give these ten your carp?

KATO (*With simple amazement*). How did you know my father was a —

ZAKKURI. I know everything. I shall know if you lie . . . Where were they?

KATO. By the Inland Sea, lord of war.

ZAKKURI. The Inland Seas are large, Kato, ten thousand miles —

KATO. High Excellency, I am a poor fisher. . . . I have a wife and children. I have done nothing . . . nothing.

ZAKKURI. Answer my questions and I will set you free.

KARA. Kato, do not speak.

ZAKKURI. Kato, do you love your hut, your Inland Seas?

KATO. O yes, high Excellency, as my life. My birth hour was upon our seas.

ZAKKURI. You say you have a wife?

KATO. O yes, high Excellency, little Niji — The Smile. She has borne me children, three, all boys . . . Kasu, Deshi, and little Tani, the last but twenty days ago. Our home has been blessed by the gods.

ZAKKURI. What would miserably become of them if you did not go back to them?

KATO. O mighty Excellency, they would wait and wait and always wait, and waiting — die.

ZAKKURI. I want Kara's ten men, each carrying two swords. On them depends your liberty, the silver carp waiting for your dry nets, little Niji — The Smile, and the three dutiful children. (*Kato with agony in his face looks toward Kara and is silent.*) And if you do not speak, it is death.

KATO (*In a paroxysm of fear*). Death. . . .

KARA. Courage, Kato.

KATO. Death. . . . Niji. . . . Little Tani. . . .

KARA. Poor Kato.

ZAKKURI. Now, Daimyo Kara, I have spoken: what hope can you offer him?

KARA. None. The deeds of the Samurai are our creed. They fought and smiled and died, but never betrayed. Courage, Kato.

ZAKKURI. Well, Kato?

KATO. If I —

(*He takes a step toward Zakkuri, then kneels.*)

KARA (*Turns before the men can stop him*). Ho! (*Zakkuri raises his hand and Kara is not molested.*) Courage, I beg of you.

KATO. My wife. . . .

KARA. I kneel.

KATO. My children. . . .

KARA. Do not speak.

KATO. Gods! They will look for me to come home when the dusk hour falls and the Junks steal in and fold their sails. They will look for Kato, and wait and wait. . . .

ZAKKURI. Kugo? (*As Kugo goes to the door in the platform and opens it.*) Take him to the room of mysteries. (*Kugo lifts the trap and goes down.*) The speechless speak quickly there.

KATO. Gods, do not take me! I have heard there are torments there. O lord of war, most high lord —

(*Two coolies approach Kato.*)

ZAKKURI. Take him.

KATO. Aie! They will make me speak.

KARA (*Still kneeling*). Kato, Kato, remember the oath you took from your father.

KATO. They will make me speak — they will make me — Aie!

(*He is taken down.*)

KARA. Courage, Kato.

(*Kato is now out of sight, but the faint call of "Niji" is heard.*)

(*Kara is pushed back. The trap is closed suddenly.*)

ZAKKURI. The simple fisher will tell. What do you say?

KARA. Yebisu!

(*Picks up a sword from a rack and turns like a flash against Zakkuri. Instantly, a glare of light pours out from the doorway at left, dazzling Kara who puts his hands to his eyes, staggering, blinded for an instant. He drops his sword.*)

ZAKKURI. The servant of the Emperor has a thousand eyes.

KARA. That he may not trust to his courage.

(*Zakkuri motions and the light on Kara disappears.*)

ZAKKURI (*Calling through the little trapdoor*). Has he spoken?

KUGO (*Below*). One moment, Lord.

ZAKKURI. Well?

KUGO. He is dead.

ZAKKURI. But he spoke?

KUGO. He died without a word.

KARA (*Kneeling*). Brave Kato.

ZAKKURI (*For the first time losing his composure*). And you permitted him to die without one — (*Shuts the door in his platform, rising.*) Yebisu! (*Looking at Kara.*) Take him back. (*Kara leaves the room, the coolies following him off. Zakkuri snaps his fingers in a gesture of dismissal and all leave, save Ato. Going to the war god, kneeling.*) August Ojin Tenno, god of war, my life-god, magnanimously give me these ten swords: not for my own glory — but that I may humbly lay them at your invincible feet. Ato, fresh rice and incense for Ojin Tenno, mightiest of the eight hundred thousand.

KOJIN (*Enters, smiling. He kneels*). Madame Asani and the geisha.

ZAKKURI. Close all the doors. Lights . . . Let none enter. Saké . . . Cushions.

(*Kojin and attendants bring in lanterns, wine, and smoking materials.*)

(*Ato enters with a bowl of steaming rice and incense, placing them in front of the war god. Four singing girls and six geisha enter to music with Asani.*)

MME. ASANI. So you are graciously hard to please to-day, my Lord Zakkuri?

ZAKKURI. Yes, luscious Asani. The Emperor's servant seeks to grasp, in one brief hour, a long life's pleasure . . . Life is most uncertain at present. So dance — (*pushes the kneeling Asani to her feet*) dance something I have not yet seen.

(*Asani claps her fan and three geisha children enter and sit down, their backs to the footlights.*)

ASANI. Lord, you shall live at least two magnificent, glittering lifetimes in one hour.

ZAKKURI. Geisha promise much. Begin.

ASANI. The dance of the blowing blossoms.

(*At the tapping of the drums, the geisha at back divest themselves of the first kimonos; appearing in more gorgeous attire, they break into the "blowing blossom" dance. The drums are tapped by the three little geisha apprentices. Asani playfully throws cherry blossoms at Zakkuri.*)

GEISHA (*Singing*). "Chocho! Chocho!
Na no he ni tomare!
Na no ha go Ivenari, (*During the dance.*)
Te ni Tomare!"

ASANI. Zakkuri, how long will you admire me?

ZAKKURI. Always.

ASANI. Swear that, by Ojin Tenno, the war god you fear.

ZAKKURI. I do not involve Ojin Tenno in geisha affairs.

ASANI. Aie, you tired of all the others.

ZAKKURI. But there is only one dove-eyed Asani — only one.

ATO (*Entering*). The Princess Yo-San approaches.

ZAKKURI. The Princess Yo-San approaches. (*Claps his hands.*) Go!

(*All stop dancing.*)

(*The geisha, frightened, run off.*)

(*Asani hesitates, looks at Zakkuri.*)

ASANI. Zakkuri. . . .

ZAKKURI (*Sharply*). Go, go quickly. (*In her haste, Madame Asani drops her fan and forgets her toilet-box.*) Who rides with the Princess?

ATO. Inu, the mute.

ZAKKURI. See that he does not enter.

(*Goes to his private room. Ato quickly sits on the doorstep at back. There is a slight pause. The great door opens slowly. Yo-San enters. She wears a cloak over a kimono.*)

YO-SAN. Zakkuri. . . .

ATO. I will call His Excellency. Your servant may not enter.

(*Closes the door and goes to announce Yo-San.*)

YO-SAN (*Gazing in fear at the war god*). Aie! (*Suddenly Rosy Sky slips into the room; Yo-San turns. They stand staring at each other.*) The courtezan.

(*Rosy Sky now wears very faded finery, bedraggled, shabby.*)

ROSY SKY. What do you do here, little lady, in Zakkuri's palace? Kejo, there is sorrow in your eyes.

YO-SAN. I am miserably sorry.

ROSY SKY. Is it about men?

YO-SAN. A man.

ROSY SKY. They are all our trouble. I do not love the imposing Zakkuri, whose name is a heart thrust — no, I revile him. See what he has done for me . . . "Kitsu," he said as he took me from the dancers in the street. He gave me a hundred servants, a lacquered house; I had a gilded name and distinction; I did not even walk — I was carried; and then he took it all away — sold me to his friend for one rin. Just as I stood in all my silks, sold me for one little rin when I was worth a thousand golden yen! Jigoku, I was the most august geisha of them all; now I am dirt under their sandals. When I think of it, I cannot stay away . . .

I return to vex and pester him . . . What do you with your unpainted face seek of Zakkuri?

YO-SAN (*Wiping a tear away with her finger tip*). A life.

ROSY SKY. Of Zakkuri? Hai! Then tie your obi in front as one who has something to give. Be a courtezan. Look — (*Picks up Asani's fan.*) Asani's! (*Throws the fan down and points to the paint book which Asani has left on the floor.*) Paint . . . Women, women, women . . . always fresh ones. . . . Smile, sing, amuse him, do geisha tricks, dance, dance, drink his saké; but do not weep if you ask of Zakkuri — the prince of hell! (*Bowing to his door, she opens her fan with a whirr.*) Nothing for nothing is given here. Tie your obi in front or go.

ZAKKURI (*Entering in state costume, attended by Ato and two Secretaries, sees Rosy Sky. He gives her a withering glance*). Ato. . . .

ATO (*Seizing Rosy Sky by the shoulder, in a low voice*). How did you enter?

ZAKKURI (*Calling off*). Kugo! (*Rosy Sky slowly drops her fan in fear.*) Tell that strange woman — (*meaning Rosy Sky*) her turn will come presently.

ATO (*To Rosy Sky, obsequiously*). This way.

ROSY SKY. I think I will not wait . . . I will go. . . .
(*She starts to run to the door, but finds it guarded.*)

ATO (*Catching her kimono, drags her in another direction*). This way.

ZAKKURI. This way. It is nearer. (*Politely.*) We shall not omit the soul boats, later. (*Ato goes with Rosy Sky. Yo-San has been looking at Rosy Sky, and step by step has backed up until she stands against the wall, almost hidden in her sleeves. Zakkuri, with the air of not knowing to whom he is speaking, addresses Yo-San.*) What fair stranger honors my miserable official dwelling? (*A slight pause.*) What? (*Yo-San still standing pressed against the wall, lifts her hood.*) Ah! The magnificent Princess, the exalted Yo-San deigns to allow her feet to touch my mats. (*Kowtows.*) Considerately be seated, Yuki-Onna.

(*She sits at one side of the table. Zakkuri crosses one leg and, resting his hands on the shoulders of two attendants, sits on the other side of the table. As the attendants disappear, there is a muffled shriek from Rosy Sky.*)

YO-SAN. What was that?

ZAKKURI. I heard nothing, transcendent Princess.

YO-SAN (*Pointing*). There . . .

ZAKKURI. Sometimes I think there are restless spirits which haunt this old place of strange memories. I beg you to be at ease in my distasteful surroundings. Permit me, augustly — (*He starts to remove her cloak.*)

YO-SAN. Honorably allow me to state my errand.

(*As Yo-San grasps her cloak, he deliberately drags it, hand over hand, to his side of the table.*)

ZAKKURI. Surely the gods wrought your superb and tempting kimono out of the mists.

YO-SAN. August Zakkuri . . . I am here to —

ZAKKURI. I am overwhelmed by your condescension. Permit me, abjectly — (*pours out a cup of saké*) to offer you some of my very poor saké.

(*Yo-San mechanically touches her lips to it.*)

YO-SAN. August Zakkuri . . .

ZAKKURI. Deign to excuse my delinquent manners. I was humbly overcome. Accept a silver pipe for a little lady.

YO-SAN. I cannot smoke to-day because my heart is too filled. . . . Great War Minister: I am here to ask of you —

ZAKKURI. Yes?

YO-SAN. You have always known me in my father's house . . . it was there you told me that life was full of shadows . . . Now I have seen those shadows and so I come to you to help me because you are so powerful. You must be able to give life. Think. Yes? . . . Yes? (*He does not answer. Half whispering.*) Zakkuri, I have sheltered your enemy, Kara, and lied . . . that was reprehensible — Oh yes, indeed: but after certain intimate things have been said between a man and a woman, I do not perceive how one can die and make all that come to naught. You think that too? (*Tug-*

ging at his sleeve.) Say so. No? (*Struck.*) Oh, I did not tell you that the gods made me desire such things as kisses and embraces, and for these I have given to Kara all my souls so he cannot die. I love him. He cannot — (*changing, smiles politely*) not so soon, august Zakkuri. Kindly permit him to live.

(*She kowtows to the floor.*)

ZAKKURI. That is very much to ask, is it not? What do you wish to give for it?

YO-SAN. To give?

ZAKKURI. You honor me by coming here where all is conducted for contemptible gain.

YO-SAN. Oh . . . I will give — (*Pauses. Trying to think what she can give.*) My father — (*she bows*) has cast me out — I have nothing.

ZAKKURI. No?

YO-SAN. But I will give you anything that you ask. (*He blows up a cloud of smoke.*) Only pitifully mention it quickly, considerately.

ZAKKURI. Not quickly . . . My answer will require much tact, persuasive power.

YO-SAN. O Zakkuri, when the heart hurts, politeness stops at the lips. . . . Please, what do you honorably wish? Tell me.

ZAKKURI. Shaka, how you tremble at the thought of harm to this man! (*Lifting the lantern, he turns it so the light shines on her face.*) This outlaw taught you very much, eh? . . . You were so shrinking, so full of temple manners — you are awake. I thank Kara. Yebisu, we shall trade with zest. . . . Hai! You have much to offer. Your cheeks are ripe, fresh fruit; your eyes are flaunting velvet banners; your lips are luscious to the thirsty. You are different from these geisha.

YO-SAN. But you do not kindly tell me what you want . . . that we may trade.

ZAKKURI. A moment ago, I begged Ojin Tenno to grant me one wish — that was all I wanted — then; now I am possessed of another.

YO-SAN. Great August One — what?

ZAKKURI (*Sending up a cloud of smoke*). You.

YO-SAN. Me?

ZAKKURI. Pardon, imposing Princess, I observe that my unworthy saké remains untouched.

(*Sets the cup in her hand.*)

YO-SAN. I do not comprehend . . . but do I understand that you want my life for his? Then I honorably permit you to take it. (*Bows.*) To the gods. (*Drinks.*)

ZAKKURI. That is not what I desire.

YO-SAN. No?

ZAKKURI. But we approach . . . It is always like this when people trade . . . Oh, we will trade to-day. . . . Let us suppose that you have already had your wish — that it is granted.

YO-SAN. His life?

ZAKKURI. His life.

(*He strokes her hand with his finger tips.*)

YO-SAN. She was right, that poor Rosy Sky; she said you would do anything for women . . . women and laughter and song and no tears. . . . O good, distinguished, noble, high-born, exalted, considerate Lord Zakkuri, I will give you all that. Hai! Hai! I will amuse you . . . I will paint my cheeks redder with bani, for you will set my lover's feet out of the trap . . . Kara free? Gods, how I shall please you! I shall dance for you . . . You love song? Let me begin at once. (*He has moved the table from between them and drawn her head to his shoulder as she sings.*)

"There are fleet loves and sweet loves,
And loves of all seasons"

(*With a sob, she breaks down on his shoulder. He holds her to him.*)

ZAKKURI. You shall live in my palace . . . You shall be treated as an empress, a favorite wife.

YO-SAN. Wife?

ZAKKURI. Being an outcast, of course I cannot marry you.

YO-SAN. Oh! . . . Friend of my Father — now I know . . . (*Pointing to the door through which Rosy Sky went.*) She was that to you . . . That is being a courtezan . . . Gods! Gods!

ZAKKURI (*Chuckling*). Hai, hai, hai, hai!

YO-SAN (*Pushing him away violently*). Ah, shame! (*Rises to her feet.*) There are devils in your hands . . . your eyes. You would make me a serpent to crawl in the dust; to be crushed under your heel; to cringe before the altars — the creature lowest in all the hells! You, the small, horrible Zakkuri, would debase me before my ancestors in the twenty-seven great heavens . . . make their ghosts spit upon my tomb. Gods, you would make me a courtezan . . . No! I am a Princess of the house of Tosan . . . the blood of a thousand Princes is in my veins. . . . (*Starting to go.*) I go to the Emperor — he cannot be so terrible as his servant Zakkuri. Inu?

ZAKKURI (*Claps his hands with an air of indifference*). It is unfortunate that we cannot trade to-day —

YO-SAN. Inu?

ZAKKURI. — for death is swifter than your feet.

YO-SAN. Death?

ZAKKURI. It is Kara's death hour.

(*Yo-San turns slowly; looks at Zakkuri who is now behind his desk. He strikes the gong in dismissal.*)

YO-SAN. There is nothing else, compassionate War Lord?

ZAKKURI. O, you are here yet? . . . No, we cannot trade to-day. (*Kugo enters.*) Let there be a unison of trumpets when Kara is brought out; then a ruffle of drums to portend the beginning of the march; then Tanake the tall executioner; then the prisoner without his haori. Be ready.

(*Kugo goes, kowtowing. Yo-San stands a moment in deep trouble. Then puts two little round rings of Asani's paint on her cheeks and, step by step, moves toward Zakkuri's desk and slowly turns her obi round.*)

ZAKKURI (*Observing Yo-San's preparations*). Yes?

YO-SAN. Yes.

ZAKKURI (*Rises, bowing*). You see the fates give you to Zakkuri.

(*About to touch her hand.*)

YO-SAN. Do not touch me yet . . . keep to the trading.

ZAKKURI. Oh, I will set him free.

YO-SAN (*Pointing*). I would like to see him pass that shoji.

ZAKKURI. Do you doubt me?

YO-SAN. I would like very much to see him pass that shoji; to know that he goes back to his men free . . . I shall find that out.

ZAKKURI. How can you?

YO-SAN. I shall know.

ZAKKURI. But how can you know when he is back with his men?

YO-SAN. I know where they are.

ZAKKURI. Oh. . . . Then you will find me out, if I deceive you. Yebisu! You would tie my hands. (*Laughing.*) That is cunning. But to show you how honorably anxious I am to have your distinguished confidence, I will do even more than you ask . . . I will secure the pardon of every one of these ten Samurai. (*He kneels at his desk.*) I will not rest until I remove the edict against them. (*Rubbing a brush over an inkstone, he looks up.*) Tell me where I may let them know . . . where I may find them.

(*His face shows his eagerness to have them.*)

YO-SAN. You give too much. . . . Let Kara pass that shoji.

ZAKKURI. What? . . . I have chosen to jest and smile with you, but we have smiled enough. Do not forget that my promise is next to the Emperor's, my word is as great as his. I am — (*He towers above her as though about to awe her with his greatness — when Ato dashes in, and calling "Master" falls prostrate. A blare of trumpets is heard outside. Zakkuri's manner changes to fear.*) The Emperor's messenger . . . Gods! (*He claps his hands.*) Hyaku! Hyaku!

(*He lies prone on the floor. Ato retreats off as the big doors open wide and four heralds enter, preceding the Imperial Messenger who bears a scroll. The First Herald carries an arrow.*

The Imperial Messenger stands without salutation, touches the scroll bearing a message to his forehead, then holds it out.)

FIRST HERALD (*Holding up the arrow*). An arrow of the outlaw's which entered the sacred walls!

HERALDS (*In unison*). Rise! Receive the words of the Heaven-descended. Ruler of everlasting great Japan.

(*Zakkuri crawls on his knees to the Messenger and, with every show of fear, touches the message devoutly to his forehead.*)

MESSENGER (*Reading from the imperial scroll*). "The sacred person of the Celestial One being threatened, his servant Zakkuri is allowed no longer than the dusk hour of the morrow to fulfill his promise to find and kill these last ten under the two-sword edict."

YO-SAN (*Comprehending Zakkuri's treachery to her*). Aie!

FIRST HERALD. "These the last words of the Heaven Born!"

MESSENGER. Answer.

ZAKKURI. The abject servant of the Heaven-descended One understands.

MESSENGER. What does the servant of the Heaven-descended (*heralds kowtow*) augustly forfeit if he fail?

ZAKKURI. His life.

HERALDS (*In unison*). Good sleep, good health, long life.

(*Zakkuri lies prone as the cortege moves off amid a fanfare. Ato closes the door. Zakkuri rises, and throws himself upon Ojin Tenno, abjectly fawning.*)

ZAKKURI. My life . . . My life . . . Ojin Tenno, Ojin Tenno, do not forsake me . . . (*As he burns paper prayers.*) I have fed you the vapor of sacred rice; I have made you my life-god, I — (*Pauses, but still clinging to the god, he turns to Yo-San who has reversed her obi and wiped the paint from her cheeks.*) I will trade with you in a different way.

YO-SAN. Lies! Lies! (*She seizes the tasseled cymbals from Ojin Tenno's feet and beats them to attract the war god's notice.*) Ojin Tenno, Ojin Tenno! A liar prays to you — do not listen.

ZAKKURI. Let him be deaf: I ask it, if the trading be not fair this time. (*A gong sounds; then the chanting of priests is*

heard.) The priests begin to chant for Kara. (*Yo-San sinks to her knees, her body swaying.*) Tell me where his ten men are hidden and I give him back to you without so much as touching your most desired hand. It shall be much for nothing as you first wished. (*As she does not answer.*) You do not know where those men are . . . you said that to deceive me . . . You lied! If you knew, you would not let him die — you could not.

YO-SAN. There was a moment of parting this morning, O Zakkuri, when I stood outcast. . . . In all this world I had only that poor place of meeting put in my hand by Kara. In solemn parting, I accepted that trust; I cannot betray it, I cannot kill his ten for one — even if that one be Kara. . . . Gods, I do not know what to do . . . I do not know what to do.

ZAKKURI. Aie!

YO-SAN. I will not speak more, or what is honor?

ZAKKURI. What is honor?

YO-SAN. To me now, nothing — I hate it. But I must think as he thinks; it is not what I think. I would take every living thing in this world and kill it for him, such is miserable love. Aie! But what you ask of me . . . Shaka!

ZAKKURI. He will not know if —

YO-SAN. I will not speak.

ZAKKURI (*Strikes the gong and presently calls*). Bring Kara.

(*The doors open and Zakkuri's henchmen appear from various directions. Geisha peep in giggling. The music of the "Unblessed Dead" is played. Four guards, accompanied by the bearer of a death edict, enter. They are followed by two half-naked coolies who guard Kara. Kara is very pale, his eyes are bandaged.*)

YO-SAN. Kara!

ZAKKURI (*To the geisha*). Ssh! (*They disappear.*) Bring Kara — and go!

(*The coolies bring Kara to Zakkuri. The music sinks to a low tapping of death's-head drums and the occasional clang of a gong. Yo-San sinks down until she is sitting on the floor, her*

Photo. Byron, N. Y.

Scene from THE DARLING OF THE GODS

ZAKKURI (*George Arliss*) *takes* YO-SAN'S (*Blanche Bates*) *hand and draws her to the open trap, forcing her to look down.*
"It is not yet too late."

feet crossed, her head bowed. All, save the two coolies, go into the corridor. Zakkuri takes the handkerchief from Kara's eyes. Kara stares straight ahead into space, as though he saw all in a dream.)

YO-SAN Lord, I have made you die . . . I have dutifully remembered honor. Aie, turn to me, Lord! Say that you are glad I made you die, that you wish to — to die. . . . (*She takes Kara's hand — it falls lifelessly to his side.*) What have you done to him? (*To Kara.*) Are you already dead?

ZAKKURI. He but sleeps . . . 'Tis nothing. We give them dreams that the awakening may be more terrible below. (*Points down through the open door in his platform.*) Shall he go down?

(*As he makes a gesture, the coolies take Kara down the stairs, his feet guided by them. The trapdoor is left open.*)

YO-SAN (*On her knees*). O Kara, to your souls I pledge mine forever. . . .

(*Zakkuri raises his hand.*)

KUGO (*Below, calls*). In the name of the Emperor!

(*Zakkuri bows.*)

(*It is evident that Kara is being tormented below, each time "In the name of the Emperor" is spoken.*)

ZAKKURI. His dreams are ending . . . He is awake now. (*To Yo-San.*) Where are the ten enemies of the Emperor? Tell me and I will let Kara go free.

KUGO (*Below*). In the name of the Emperor!

(*Zakkuri bows.*)

ZAKKURI. Will you speak? I have sworn by Ojin Tenno, Kara shall never be re-taken.

YO-SAN. Zakkuri!

KUGO (*Below*). In the name of the Emperor!

ZAKKURI (*Bowing*). Do you speak? (*He takes Yo-San's hand and draws her to the open trap, forcing her to look down.*) It is not yet too late.

YO-SAN (*Aghast at what she sees*). Ah!

ZAKKURI (*Calls*). Again —

YO-SAN. No, no! . . . In the red bamboo forest by the

Daimyo tombs . . . (*Holds out the piece of parchment which Kara has given to her.*) It is written here.

(*Zakkuri takes the parchment.*)

KUGO (*Below*). In the name of —

ZAKKURI. Wait, Kugo. (*He looks at the parchment, then calls so that Kara may hear.*) I considerately permit the outlaw Kara to go free. (*He motions to Yo-San to step away from the trapdoor lest she should be seen. He shuts it. She takes the parchment from him and falls upon it, wailing and beating herself with sounding blows.*) Sh!

YO-SAN. Kara, I have told . . . I have told.

CURTAIN

ACT V

FIRST SCENE : *The meeting-place at the ruined shrine of the Goddess Kwannon.*

Dusk hour of the third day.

The shrine is at the foot of a steep mountain rising at the back. A long flight of stone steps leads down to the shrine; halfway up these steps is a rock landing, which leads to the Bamboo Forest. Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy, stands with her ruined arms outstretched downward in benediction. A tori spans the centre of the scene and on it is the Japanese inscription: "Mercy to all who pass." A small fire is flickering under the tori. The ruins of a temple are seen at the left. Sunset is deepening to dusk.

As the curtain rises, Bento, wearing mail, is doing sentinel duty, looking off to the right. Halfway down the steps at the landing stands Nagoya, also in mail. He is looking off to the left. Nine men are present. All are waiting for Banza. Every man wears two swords.

Kara, tired and spent, is gazing into the fire abstractedly.

TORI. Is there no sign of Banza, Nagoya?

NAGOYA. I see no one, save my little Sano who is playing.

KORIN. It is nearly time for the dusk-hour prayer.

NAGOYA. It will be a clear night. The bamboos stand sharp against the sky. There is no mist over the marshes.

(*The mournful cry of the Chida bird is heard.*)

BENTO. Listen. . . .

TORI. The cry of the Chida bird.

KORIN. Who gives the signal?

TORI. Who?

KORIN. It is not Banza.

KARA (*Half to himself*). The third day . . . it is the third day since I parted from Yo-San . . . Can it be —

NAGOYA. It is the Fox Woman.

(*Two Fox Men enter, jump down the steps and sit playing on reeds. The Fox Woman appears, carrying a long staff — a small lighted lantern attached to it. Her clothing is shrunken by rain and stained by contact with the earth.*)

FOX WOMAN (*Bowing with profound respect*). Samurai.

(*She lights a paper.*)

NAGOYA (*Seeing that she brings a gift*). Yebisu, mother, a silver carp!

FOX WOMAN. To-day the Fox Woman does not eat. The lordly woods she knows so well have been troubled for three nights . . . as though they had the feeling of strangers in them . . . They are restless.

TORI. Woman's talk. . . .

NAGOYA. Dreaming one, eat in peace.

FOX WOMAN. Aie! The whispering loneliness is gone out of the august bamboos. Something threatens . . . Do you not hear? Sh!

NAGOYA. I do not hear a sound. Bento?

(*He lays the carp in a basket.*)

BENTO (*Who has gone to a higher level*). There is not a breath to-night.

FOX WOMAN. Then it may be that I do not hear — I feel. . . . Far-seeing Bento, go — look!

BENTO (*Goes off*). Ha! Ha!

NAGOYA (*Echoing Bento's laughter as he disappears*). Ha! Ha!

FOX WOMAN. I was sleeping under a blossoming tree . . .

there was not a sign of wind, — when suddenly out of the windless silence, a strong branch snapped and the blossoms shook down. I thought I saw figures, men with strange iron staffs over their shoulders.

TORI (*The only one impressed — to the others*). Could it be that Zakkuri's musket men —

KORIN. Ay, guided by the birds of the air.

BENTO (*Returning*). Nothing.

NAGOYA (*Returning*). Nothing.

FOX WOMAN. Daimyo — you . . . (*Kara turns to her.*) When one has entered Zakkuri's terrible house, it is better that he does not come back : evil follows evil . . . Vengeful spirits walk behind him. (*She lights papers in her lantern and, as they burn, she tosses them in the air and gestures as though waving spirits away.*) Go . . .

(*The wind comes up.*)

NAGOYA. Peace, woman.

FOX WOMAN (*As the wind dies down, still addressing the spirits*). Go . . . Go . . .

(*She passes off into the darkness, softly wailing, followed by the Fox Men.*)

KARA. Banza is here.

(*Banza enters. He is old, patriarchal, his face heavy with thought. His armor is worn over a priest's robe; mail is seen under his long flowing sleeves. He is holding the hand of little Sano, who carries two small swords in his belt.*)

SANO (*Running to Nagoya*). My father, Nagoya.

BANZA (*Advancing, lays his hand on Kara's shoulder*). Daimyo. (*As he goes to the shrine, all turn to Banza.*) Once more we are permitted to meet here for the dusk hour. (*Kara takes his two swords and lifts them up before the shrine; others do the same. Little Sano, kneeling, strikes the cymbals as though to attract the attention of Kwannon. All bow very low — their swords outstretched toward the goddess.*) Attend . . . (*Cymbals sound.*) Attend . . . (*Cymbals sound again.*) August Kwannon, Goddess of Mercy : here assembled at the dusk hour we honorably ask as always that we, the last of the

Samurai, may live for our swords and by our swords may die. Nembutsu, nembutsu.

ALL (*Murmuring*). Keep it . . . Keep it . . . Keep it.

BANZA. Gods, remember Kato the carp fisher.

(*All bow very low; Sano strikes the cymbals.*)

KARA (*Suddenly rising*). Did you not hear —

TORI. What?

KORIN. What?

KARA. My name?

NAGOYA. No.

BANZA (*Stretching out his arm toward Kara in protection and unspeakable love*). The Daimyo has come back to us but his heart is not here. Without you, O Daimyo, chieftain, we are children; with you, the warrior, we are lions. Kara, do you love to lead us no more?

KARA. Do I not lead you as always?

BANZA. Aie, but there is no longer a soul in your sword. You are a man of mystery . . . your very pardon is a mystery.

KARA. I do not understand it myself.

BANZA. Zakkuri never gave a life for nothing.

NAGOYA. Never.

TORI. Never.

BANZA. There is a price for it.

KARA. I only know that my swords were thrust into my girdle, a voice whispered: "Go, but remember all must think you dead." I tore the bandage from my eyes. I saw the sunlight suddenly. Every road was deserted as if by intention.

NAGOYA. Did you linger to see if any followed?

KARA. I lay an hour at the lantern of the Demon's Eye. No one passed. Then I took the false road.

BANZA. Clearly there was only one object, — to find us all; and yet he did not follow . . . and he wants it believed that you are dead.

NAGOYA. It is strange.

BANZA. Was any one with Zakkuri when you were set free?

KARA. I cannot remember . . . when they tortured me, I thought of you all as I was drifting away . . . of you,

Banza, with tears, and of — (*A pause.*) The gods have made this world sweeter than I thought before I went into hiding.

BANZA. What is sweeter to a Samurai than his honor? Now I know what has changed you.

NAGOYA. It is that woman.

KORIN AND BENTO (*Protesting*). Nagoya!

TORI. Do not say it.

BENTO. The Daimyo has led us in a hundred battles. He has taken oath: "In all our lives, no woman."

TORI. "Nothing but our swords."

(*Little Sano, attracted by the fireflies, has gone halfway up the steps and now, turning at the sound of their angry voices, sits folding his hands, looking down upon them with childish curiosity.*)

NAGOYA. Does he deny what I have said?

KARA. No. A woman, outcast through sheltering me — with no place to lay her head, is every moment in my thoughts. . . . I bade her — if I lived — come to me here.

KORIN. Here?

BANZA. Here?

TORI. Not here!

KARA. Here, on the third day. It is the third day and my heart is crying out for her. Samurai, I have broken my oath . . . I can no longer lead you.

NAGOYA. A Samurai of our last ten has no right to love. It is best that you do not lead us.

TORI. It is best. Korin?

KORIN. It is best.

ALL (*Save Banza*). It is best.

KARA. Then let me follow.

NAGOYA. With a woman? No.

(*Kara gives his swords to Banza, turns, falls on the rock, overcome.*)

ALL (*Echoing Nagoya*). No, no, no.

BANZA. Is there a heart here that has not loved, that is not scarred as are our bodies? Nagoya, you awoke to the

Samurai oath when little Sano's celestial mother died ; and even yet, you think of her. (*Nagoya turns away.*) Some of our women are gone, weary with waiting ; some dead by our enemies ; but their spirits have ever led us to just revenge, even when our hearts have been heaviest.

TORI (*Sternly*). Still —

BANZA. Under the bamboos there is one sleeping, Tori, who found love stronger than the frail body that followed you. (*Tori abruptly turns his back.*) We are only men of memories, grizzled and battle-scarred ; the Daimyo is young. Youth will have its love, even as we had ours. . . .

(*Unseen by the Samurai, Yo-San appears above, coming slowly down the steps.*)

SAMURAI. Chieftain. . . .

(*All kneel as though asking Kara's pardon.*)

KARA. Samurai, my brothers.

LITTLE SANO. August Nagoya, my father, look !

(*Nagoya turns to look. Yo-San, tired and foot-sore, pauses on the step.*)

KARA. Yo-San. . . .

(*She comes down slowly. Sano goes to her, gives her his hands, helping her. Banza meets her and brings her forward.*)

YO-SAN. Kara. . . .

KARA (*As she falls in his arms with a weary wail*). Aie, she has come far to me. . . . Samurai, the Princess of Tosan. (*The Samurai bow and kneel. Yo-San looks into Kara's face searchingly — then watches the others — knowing that all these men have been betrayed by her.*) This is Banza. (*As she hears the name "Banza" she draws her hood down and sinks to her knees. Kara kneels, resting her head against his body, lifting her hood.*) It is all strange to her. . . . (*Banza makes a sign to the others and they draw aside.*) Rest here and may love atone for all you have lost for me.

(*He lays her on a fur skin on the ground and stands over her.*)

LITTLE SANO. I will sing to my samisen softly, that she may have celestial dreams.

(*Goes up with his samisen and, sitting on the steps, plays.*)

YO-SAN. Kara, let us go away. . . .

KARA. Go away? . . . She is frightened.

YO-SAN. Go away beyond the west ocean . . . Let us go now — quickly. (*Changing.*) No, Kara: it is too late!

KARA. What, my Yo-San?

(*Yo-San looks at him strangely, then, yielding to exhaustion, she murmurs "too late" and, lying down again, presently falls asleep. Kara puts her cloak over her. Banza, who has approached Yo-San and heard her say "too late," is troubled, perplexed.*)

SANO (*Singing*).

"In old days lived a musume fair,
And to her door came insects rare,
They chirped and croaked and sang of love
Till morning met the moon above."

KARA. Who watches to-night?

TORI. Tori.

(*He goes off to the left.*)

BENTO. Bento.

(*He goes up the steps.*)

KORIN. Korin.

(*He goes up to the right.*)

BANZA (*To the others*). Rest to-night . . . it has been a long day.

(*The men pass into the ruined temple.*)

NAGOYA (*To Sano*). Little cricket, come, it is time for you to sleep.

SANO (*On the steps*). No, I am singing to the lovely lady.

(*Nagoya, smiling, passes into the temple. Sings.*)

"Chan-chan-
Cha-cha-
Yoitomose, yoitomose —
Chan-chan —"

(*The dull whirr of a shot is heard, a string snaps, the samisen falls out of the boy's hands, he rolls gently down three steps and lies dead.*)

BANZA. Sano!

(*He rushes forward and brings Sano down, laying him by the fire.*)

BENTO (*Comes down*). Zakkuri's musket men —

TORI (*Backing on*). Zakkuri —

KARA. They have found us . . . Look — how many?

(*Bento, Tori, and Korin rush off.*)

BANZA. Poor little Sano.

KARA (*At temple door — calling. He is the leader now*). Samurai! Samurai! (*They all enter save Nagoya.*) Nagoya — (*Nagoya appears in the temple door. To Nagoya, pointing.*) Sano. . . .

NAGOYA (*Frantically*). O Gods, my boy! My beautiful boy!

KARA. We must wait for Bento, Korin, Tori . . . Watch. (*Nagoya takes the child into the temple, wailing.*) Gods! How did Zakkuri know?

BANZA. Kara . . . it is the woman.

KARA. No. . . .

BANZA. Zakkuri wanted all to think you dead: how did she know you were here alive?

KARA (*Struck*). Shaka! (*Goes to Yo-San — wakens her.*) Yo-San, Yo-San — the parchment I gave you . . . Zakkuri. . . .

YO-SAN. Zakkuri. . . . (*She looks from face to face, as the men draw nearer to her.*) All . . . All. . . .

KARA. Sh! (*He draws his hand across his forehead as though trying to realize what she has done . . . There is silence — no one stirs.*) Was that the price of my freedom? — They were to die, and I to live? (*She crawls to him.*) Samurai . . .

YO-SAN. I did not know them. They were strangers. I knew you . . .

KARA. Gods, did you not know honor?

YO-SAN. I only knew you, Lord.

TORI (*Backing in from the left*). Zakkuri's men are everywhere.

BENTO (*Coming on from the turning of the steps at right*). There is a ring of steel around us.

KORIN (*Returning*). They come from every side.

KARA (*Drawing his sword, facing them*). Gods! We have fought battles before.

BENTO. Aie . . . There is a way out of this trap across the mountains.

(*Runs up the steps followed by Tori.*)

KARA. Draw. . . .

(*Every sword is drawn.*)

(*As Bento reaches the top of the steps to see if the way is clear, he is shot down.*)

TORI. Bento! (*Then in a hushed voice, pointing off.*) Torches . . . Torches . . . everywhere. . . .

KARA. They move slowly, surely, lest we slip through.

NAGOYA (*Who has appeared in the temple door, his face ghastly pale, his sleeve rolled up, a sword in his hand.*) Aie, we fight no more upon Hakoné.

BANZA. It is the end.

KARA. Samurai, my brothers . . . Gods, it is through me.

(*Striking himself in grief.*)

YO-SAN. Kara. . . .

(*Drags herself to Kara, takes out a sword which she gives to him, opens her kimono, bares her throat and waits to be killed.*)

BANZA. Prince, it is not for us to give the punishment. Henceforth, under our laws and our gods, she is as one dead, for she has betrayed to death lives entrusted to honor. Of those who sully honor it is written : none shall touch them, feed them, give them shelter. A death hour awaits them with none to see or hear . . . no gods — nothing. (*To Kara.*) Obey the law. (*Kara retreats, followed by the others. To Yo-San.*) You stand alone.

YO-SAN. But not for long . . . I shall die and go to the lotus fields with him.

BANZA. Alas, you cannot, unhappy one.

YO-SAN. I cannot die . . . with him?

BANZA. Princess of Tosan, you are accursed. Kneel.

YO-SAN. I shall be separated from him?

BANZA (*Opening his scroll of rites — Nagoya holding the torch that she may see to read*). Read what is written for those like you.

YO-SAN (*Reading*). "Before the betrayers of honor shall rise to the First White Heaven of Form, they" — Aie!

BANZA. Read.

YO-SAN. "They shall sink down into the darkness of wandering souls, for the gods hold them back from heaven — one thousand years."

(*All drop to their knees with a faint murmur of horror.*)

BANZA. One thousand years. . . .

YO-SAN. Then I have thrown away this whole world to be with him . . . and I cannot . . . because there is a thing called honor. Aie!

(*Wailing, she falls to the ground.*)

ZAKKURI'S VOICE (*At a little distance*). Samurai?

YO-SAN (*Calling out*). Ah no, Zakkuri, no!

BANZA (*In a low voice*). Zakkuri. . . .

ZAKKURI'S VOICE. Do you give up your swords? . . . Answer.

KARA (*Raising his voice so that Zakkuri will hear*). Samurai: I look upon your faces for the last time.

YO-SAN. No, no, Kara!

KARA. There were forty-seven Ronin: like them we have but one word: honor. There were thirty of us . . . then ten . . . in a moment there will be none.

BANZA. But our names shall be whispered to the gods.

KARA. Are we satisfied?

ALL. We are satisfied.

(*They kneel preparing for battle, putting on their helmets.*)

YO-SAN (*Going to the steps*). No, no, Zakkuri, take me.

ZAKKURI'S VOICE. Samurai, in the Emperor's name, your answer!

KARA. Gentlemen of Japan, we are making our last stand. Those who live can fight no more; wait for the end in the Bamboo Forest . . . as Samurai who die by their own swords. To those who do not come, a happy, peaceful, glorious good-night.

(*All salute and, with the exception of Banza, file past Kara with drawn swords. They form a line up the steps, waiting for Kara to lead them.*)

YO-SAN (*Grasping Kara's cloak*). Forgive me. . . .

KARA. I am a Samurai . . .

(*He goes forward with Banza, all following.*)

YO-SAN. Kara . . . Kara. . . .

(*She falls on the steps and lies in the darkness as the last battle of the Samurai is fought.*)

CURTAIN

SECOND SCENE : *The Red Bamboo Forest. The tryst of death. The light of the red and full moon illuminates a grove of bamboo trees riven and burnt by lightning. The scarred spikes of bamboo stand up like javelins.*

Kara appears, spent, breathless, everything about him bespeaking desperate combat. He throws his armor on the ground. He pauses — recovers his breath and, putting his sword on the earth, steadies himself with it.

KARA (*Calling*). Who is here?

NAGOYA'S VOICE (*From the right, faintly*). Nagoya. . . .

KORIN'S VOICE (*From the left*). Korin. . . .

TORI (*From the left*). Tori. . . .

KARA. And Banza? (*A silence.*) All are gone?

TORI'S VOICE. All are gone.

NAGOYA'S VOICE (*Faintly*). We can fight no more.

KARA. Then to us the honor of dying by our own swords. We have prayed for it.

(*He puts his sword to his forehead.*)

NAGOYA. Chieftain, I die. . . . Sayonara. . . .

(*The sound of a body in armor is heard to fall.*)

KARA. Sayonara. . . . I salute your soul as it passes.

(*He looks into the air as though he could feel the soul in its flight.*)

TORI. Sayonara. . . .

KORIN. Sayonara. . . .

KARA (*Immovable*). I salute you. . . . I salute. . . . (*He takes off his cloak, throws it on the ground, turns his back, kneels, lifting his head.*) Shaka! (*Kowtows. Yo-San comes on, standing humbly in silence.*) You are there . . .

YO-SAN. Abjectly, Lord, I am here. Oh reach me your hand . . . I love you. . . . (*Coming down, kneeling by his side — almost in a whisper.*) Let me slip by the judgment gods with you . . . in the dark.

KARA. You cannot.

YO-SAN. Let me be with you but one step of the way : I know it is forbidden but the gods may not see — they are so vast.

KARA. The gods are just. (*Still with no emotion, but raising his small sword.*) Sayonara. . . .

YO-SAN. August Lord, before you take your life, wait but one minute — wait. (*Still not daring to touch him.*) I . . . I . . . Oh, I must suffer all these thousand years of torments alone in the dark ; but I do not care if at the end I shall see your face. . . . Whisper that you forgive ; that you will wait for me at the edge of the First White Heaven beyond the Meido where I shall come to meet you pure and white . . . in one long thousand years.

KARA (*Making a wound with his short sword, then holding out his arm*). Yo-San, I can forgive . . . now. (*Takes her in his arms and falls.*) Gods . . . be gentle with her . . . remembering it was for love.

YO-SAN. But you will wait for me ?

KARA (*Lying in her arms, his face upturned*). In the Meido, call my name . . . I shall be waiting . . . I shall be listening. Sayonara. . . .

YO-SAN. Sayonara. . . . (*Then uplifting her head.*) From Nirvana, it is whispered to me : a thousand years in the sight of the gods are as one moment : are as a flash in the night upon Hakoné. . . . Sayonara. . . .

(*She touches the hilt of her knife — raises it, looking upward, praying, her lips not moving. As the lights go out, her knife is heard to drop.*)

CURTAIN

THIRD SCENE : *An intermezzo, solemn and with a relentless swing, is played as though in the blackness of the underworlds. It is faintly heard and almost dies out as the curtain rises in dark-*

ness, showing The Mountain of Shiede on the brink of The River of Souls. It is a ghostly black mountain over which a flush of fire comes and goes. A black restless river runs below it. The waters live and move, rising in human shapes, as souls float across and disappear. Presently the soul of Yo-San floats by, and we hear Kara's name called softly.

YO-SAN. Kara, where are you . . . Kara, where are you. . . . It is a thousand years . . . Have you forgot? . . . Which is the way to the First White Heaven? . . . Kara . . . Kara. . . .

(*The scene fades slowly into*

THE FIRST CELESTIAL HEAVEN

A Thousand Years Have Elapsed.

Only vague shadows are seen. The lower ones are dark, suggesting the border between the underworlds and the Celestial Heaven. Kara appears at the back, among the lighter shadows, waiting. His face is luminous, his arms outstretched. Yo-San, now in form, is seen drifting up toward him. With shining faces and arms outstretched, they meet. During this, music is heard: a slow crescendo to the point where they meet, when it swells into ecstasy, then dies note by note. As they ascend to the next Celestial Heaven, the refrain of "Nothing ever Changes" is vaguely heard. When the lights fade away, the curtain falls in darkness.

ADREA

"Adrea" was a collaboration between John Luther Long and Mr. Belasco. One must realize, in order to understand the dynamic pressure upon Mr. Belasco, that this playwriting game of his was carried on under the most arduous and exacting conditions. The plays in this volume do not represent his sole activity. He had a coterie of developing "stars" under his management, and to each came a new season with demands for a new play. There was more than one string to his bow, and the better to suggest this, the partial chronological list of his ventures, covering the time embraced in the chronological appearance of these plays, will visualize how they fell and how great a weight pressed upon his own shoulders. For never more tensely was he faced by the animosity of the Theatrical Trust than at this moment — when he was preparing "Adrea" as a new vehicle for Mrs. Leslie Carter.

As for the collaboration, Mr. Belasco has himself recorded the following, — what happened after the plot was developed:

Mr. Long and I worked on the scenes apart, then met and joined them together. He revised the result and I revised the result, and so on, until the sixth or seventh version found the scenes in very good condition. John Luther Long was a delightful collaborator.

Between the two passed correspondence as well as week-end visits, which clearly measured what went on, each in his lonely toil. Two letters, quoted in William Winter's biography of Mr. Belasco (2: 135–137), and here reproduced by permission, are representative:

(John Luther Long, in Philadelphia, to David Belasco, in New York.)

——————————(?) 1903.

I have now, my dear Goliath, been pretty well over the history of Rome once more, and I have found only two places where we might possibly stick in our pin. One is the Augustan Era, and Livia and Julia; the other is the reign of Claudius and Messalina. I don't think you would like either. I am sure *I* don't! Besides, both have been done to death. There were NO woman rulers of Rome, and only one — Messalina — who took much of a hand at politics. I think we shall finally agree upon some island or mountain plateau — the latter commends itself because the other has been so often done. I think we could use either the island of Pandataria in the Adriatic, or the little island of Ilva in the Mediterranean. We could have all the Roman splendor there, without the handicap of being, unhistorically, IN Rome. Here is the scheme which outlines itself in my mind:

When Rome was finally subdued, in A.D. 476, Romulus was on the throne. He was kicked out and sort of lost — though he is said by some of the histories I have read to have gone to live privately in the Campagna. He does not seem to have left any heirs. But let us give him some. Or *one*. This one seeks out one of these islands and takes with him some Romans to build anew the debased Roman Empire with the blood of the old Patricians alone. It is this kingdom, several hundred years later, — so that four or five of Romulus' descendants may intervene, — where we locate our play. And now, there are no males of the pure Roman blood and the succession falls to the two women.

I rather dislike the creation of a name, such as Romancia or Ruritania or such like, and I think we could use the real name of the island, if we adopt it. And both are pretty good names. Pandataria. Ilva. Or we could, as you suggested, make some name out of the real names: Pinda — Illus — Illa — and so on. All the histories stop at that wonderful period of ours, 476 A.D., when our Odvokar did the trick. (One of them goes on to say that he stops there because the rest is too indecent for publication!) But I am on the track of some good books treating of that period — though I don't expect to find a woman or a ruler in it all. For in this period, ALL the sovereigns, without exception, were elected by the soldiers in the field and the corrupt pretorians at home — with, once in a while, the people waking up and saying a word. After I have well looked up this period,

I will run over and we will talk — when you can spare the time.

Don't forget to tell your girl to send me the copies she makes. If anything should happen, by fire or flood, you have all the stuff over there.

Yours,

J. L. L.

(David Belasco to John Luther Long, in Philadelphia.)

The Belasco Theatre,
New York, April 2, 1904.

My dear Jonathan: —

You are right about the bench. I had already noted it and called Bucklands' and Gros' attention to it, but outside of that correction, when we make the model, both the scenes will be corkers, full of the right sentiment and feeling — the atmosphere perfect. I am running over to see Mrs. Carter to have a talk with her about certain people for the cast and also a general chat as to the costumer. She is miles deep planning them already. Before she goes to 'Frisco, you and I together will have a talk with her.

I am on the Fourth Act all the time. It is great — *great* — GREAT. They can't beat us — we are the top notches! Furst is going insane with pleasure over his share of the work. He loves it and is so infatuated that he is good for nothing else at present. In fact, everybody who has anything to do with the play is wild over it. I shall be back on Monday. What day after that can you come over? We will get in some big licks with Buckland, as I want to start him on the properties, etc., as soon as possible. God give us health and strength to knock out the great play!

Faithfully,
David.

At last the tragedy was ready (begun in 1903 and completed in September, 1904), and the tragedienne trained. Mrs. Carter was now recognized for all the requisites which mark the passionate player. The papers lauded her astonishing vitality, her superabundant energy, her nervous reserve, her ardent temperament. They hailed it, and Mr. Belasco satisfied it. When he sat before his three-panelled screen in his studio, upon which

bits of dialogues and schemes for situations were pinned, he might as well have sat before a pattern of something to fit the physical and psychical requirements of his players. For no one knew so well as he their excellencies, their limitations; no one knew so exactly how far he might stretch their abilities to meet the requirements. "Adrea", under the spell of "Tosca", was cut to fit. It was also splashed on a background which would give the producer every opportunity of maintaining his prestige for atmosphere. Whereas in "Du Barry" he had found himself with a heroine noted for her unbridled extravagance, and whereas the age in which she held for a time unprecedented court was extravagant, here was a period where gorgeousness was more barbaric, and the producer had to steep himself in the customs and habits of a less polished age. For the time being, Mr. Belasco, buried in commentaries on wines and fruits, games and chariots, became an authority on Roman History. In the same way he had found himself obliged to make an intensive study of the Samurai. A period play challenges the historical sense. Even though, for romantic reasons, the facts of history are juggled and often-times consciously distorted, the fundamental details have to be made accurate. In these matters, Mr. Belasco has never left to his associates and subordinates what he interprets as being the duty of prime importance for the producer.

The first production of "Adrea" was in itself a brave adventure, since Washington, D. C., was one of the strongholds of the Theatrical Trust, and Mr. Belasco found all legitimate theatre doors closed to him. There was nothing left for him but to rent a hall and convert it to his needs. Convention Hall was changed as quickly as possible into a theatre. Drapery covered the ungainly girders of the building, and some semblance of decoration given to the ungainly auditorium, built for five thousand. Carloads of hangings from "Du Barry" and "The Darling of the Gods" were hastened to the Capital City, and thus, despite a belated opposition of the Fire Department, "Adrea" was able to open on schedule time.

During the course of the play, it began to rain violently, and

the persistent patter on the tin roof all but drowned the voices of the players; it did more, for the roof itself leaked, and Mr. Belasco has memories of seeing Admiral Dewey and Admiral Schley, with open umbrellas, trying to save the evening gowns of their women folk from the green dye which fell in blotches from the green gauze of the hangings. This defiance of the Trust was costly, but was rewarded by the loyalty of Washington audiences. Nevertheless, there was a startling figure of more than $25,000 on the debit side of the books, for a week's engagement.

The New York run began at the Belasco Theatre, January 11, 1905, and, so claims William Winter, definitely established Mrs. Carter as an eloquent, authoritative tragedienne. But this proved to be the last play written by Mr. Belasco for the "star" he had made; it in fact was to be the beginning of the end of their association, for, in the summer of 1906, after a tour which included a repertory of plays — "Adrea", "Du Barry", and "Zaza", — they severed relations.[1]

It was not, however, to be the last of that broadly extravagant kind of production which no other American manager could do so well as Mr. Belasco. In "Adrea", he had, according to H. T. Parker, of the *Boston Transcript*, reached his pinnacle as follower of Sardou; the play was instinct with cumulative theatrical interest, and redolent with pictorial quality.

[1] Afterwards, under new direction, Mr. Long wrote for Mrs. Carter "Kassa", produced on January 23, 1909.

ADREA

By David Belasco and John Luther Long

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ADREA

A TRAGIC PLAY

By David Belasco and John Luther Long

"Know, all men, these, Menethus' laws, and, as ye know them, heed: This, first: No state can live whose princes lack a perfect body with a perfect mind. Therefore, 'tis first ordained: No sovereign shall sit my throne or wear my crown who is not in his mind and body sound."

CAST

Kaeso of Noricum, *leader of a Barbarian horde*	*Battle Brothers*	Charles A. Stevenson
Arkissus of Frisia, *under Kaeso*		Tyrone Power
Marcus Lecca, *Prince of the Senate, a Consul*		R. D. McLean
Holy Nagar		H. R. Roberts
Mimus, the Echo, *fool in the household of Iulia Doma*		J. H. Benrimo
Bevilaccas, *a licensed news-bearer*		Claude Gillingwater
Caius Valgus, *Consul*		Marshall Welch
Sylvestros, *a Prince of Greece*	*ambassadors of note come to the coronation*	Gilmore Scott
Dyaixes, *the Persian*		Louis Keller
Bram-Bora, *from India*		Edward Brigham
Maslak, *the African*		H. R. Pomeroy
Master of the Tower		H. G. Carlton
Servant of the Tower		Gerald Kelly
The Shade of Menethus		Charles Hungerford
Thryssos, *master of wild horses from Thrakia*		Francis Powers
Idmondus, *a herald at the palace*		Gordon West
A Mock Herald		Arthur Marryatt
Crassus, *an augur from the college at Rome*		Edwin Hardin
Herald of the Senate		Franklin Mills
Page of the Senate		Harold Guernsey
A Bargeman		Luther Barry
Zastus	*two soldiers of Adrea*	Teft Johnson
Galba		Harry Sheldon
Sigrad, *follower of Kaeso*		Charles Wright
Var-Igon, *follower of Kaeso*		F. L. Evans
Slave of the Whips		James H. George

Slave of the Queen's Door	Joseph Moxley
The Child Vasha (*in the epilogue*)	Louis Grimm
Iulia Doma, *Adrea's sister*	Edith Crane
Garda, *the Egyptian, slave to Adrea*	Maria Davis
Myris, Lefta, Lelit — *tiring slaves to the Queen*	Corah Adams-Myll, Lura Osborn, Grace Noble
A Singing Bird	Madeleine Livingston
Adrea, *daughter of King Menethus*	Mrs. Leslie Carter

Vestals, wantons of Iulia's court, a family of peasants, senators, pyrrhic dancers, courtiers, soldiers of Adrea, guards of the palace, official witnesses, altar slaves, slaves of the palace, tiring women of the bath, slaves, flamens.

ACT I

Part I: Outside the palace of the Kings of the land of Adrea. "The Hundredth Day." (The last day of the time allotted between the death of the old ruler and the crowning of the new.)
Late afternoon.

Part II: Between the falling and rising of the curtain, a night passes.
The scene is the same. It is now early dawn.

ACT II

The Tower of Forgetfulness, three hours later.
"Seek not thou to find thy Fate. 'Tis following after thee."
"There were two doors to this tower: one, of Entrance, skirting the land, the other, of Release, overlooking the deep sea, neither ever closed. The Grace of all the Gods!"

ACT III

The Crowning of the Queen. Five hours later on the same day.
"The jewels of a crown are tears."

ACT IV

The Queen's room in the palace. The end of three days Coronation Festivals.
The Judgment of Kaeso.
"Fate keeps for both one fatal day." *Horace.*

ACT V

Epilogue: In Arcady. Fourteen years later.

Time. About Five Hundred Anno Domini.
Place. The Island of Adrea in the Sea of Adrea (Adriatic).

NOTE. Both the story and location of this play are imaginary. The tragedy, however, is laid in the period when Odoacer, the Barbarian, ruled Rome, and the Roman spirit and habits still survived in the surrounding countries. Thus, a study of the classical authors has made it possible to preserve an historical correctness in the customs and detail of the period.

ACT I

PART I

The intoning of Nagar, the Priest, is heard with his Chorus, then trumpets announce the rising of the curtain.

SCENE: *An old marble palace at the back. An altar is approached by three steps; on it is inscribed "Ad Omnes Deos." A statue of King Menethus is seen crowned with a wreath of fresh laurels. About the plinth of the King's statue, his most splendid toga is draped and held with funeral fillets. Tributes are laid at its base — showing the love of the people for the King who has been dead one hundred days.*

The rose gardens stretch out towards the left. Two circular seats are placed on the stage.

After the curtain is up, we hear Nagar chanting: "Woe! Woe!" and a Chorus of vestals coming nearer and nearer. Two slaves, almost naked, their bodies oiled, are discovered back of the altar.

A peasant family enters, returning from the fields. The father carries a scythe on his shoulder, the mother a food-jar. As they approach the altar, they kneel and lay down an offering of field flowers, vine leaves and a small sheaf of grain. At the sound of Nagar's voice, the farmer kisses the dead King's toga and retires with his family to a little distance.

The temple gong sounds solemnly. Nagar's Chorus of altar maidens enters, wearing fillets of red and white wool and veils. Each bears a palm leaf. Two flamen follow, playing flutes. The vestals dance with a slow, regal movement of the feet and arms.

NAGAR'S VOICE (*Heard off*). Woe! Woe! Pray for the peace of our land.

CHORUS OF MAIDENS (*In unison as they move in the dance*). Woe! Woe! Pray for the peace of our land.

NAGAR (*Entering*). Woe! Woe is ours. (*He is a huge, swarthy,*

bearded man with crisp dark hair, an iron fillet, iron bracelets and chains, a heavy garment dropping loose from his shoulders to his ankles. He is followed by two flamen, one bearing an ewer of sacred oil and the other a jar of water. Nagar ascends the altar steps and speaks as though addressing people in the distance.) I, Nagar, Priest of the Temple of our Gods, bring for the first time the maidens of the temple to pray at the gates of this palace, lest the gods in anger depart from this city.

(*A royal salute is heard.*)

(*Idmondus, the Imperial Herald, appears in the door of the palace, sounding a trumpet.*)

IDMONDUS (*Proclaiming*). The last requiem for the King has sounded. The hundred days of mourning are passed. To-morrow a new ruler rises over us, Iulia Doma.

(*He goes towards the city repeating his message. The black slaves back of the altar remove the wreath and toga from the statue and carry them off.*)

NAGAR (*Repeating*). Iulia Doma, the King's wanton daughter.

(*The Chorus wails, the vestals beat their breasts rhythmically.*) Hear! Hear! O infinite gods, hear our shame! (*At this instant, in the far distance, cries of "Adrea, Adrea" are heard. Then Bevilaccas' voice, coming nearer, calls "Way, way, way."*) The news-gatherer, Bevilaccas.

(*Bevilaccas runs on, kneeling before Nagar.*)

NAGAR. Speak.

BEVILACCAS (*Kneeling*). An augur is come from Rome to forecast the reign of Iulia Doma, to-morrow's Queen.

NAGAR. But why do the people call the name of Adrea?

BEVILACCAS. Because they hate the wanton, Iulia Doma. 'Tis her sister, the Princess Adrea, they cry for and she, being blinded, may not rule. They beg the holy Nagar to pray for the blind daughter of our dead King, that she may see and reign for the peace of our land.

NAGAR. I will pray.

BEVILACCAS (*Rushing off, calling*). He will pray . . . Way, way, way for Bevilaccas.

(*Drunken laughter is heard.*)

NAGAR. The barbarians made welcome to Iulia's Court. (*To the maidens.*) Draw near — closer.

(*Three drunken, bestial-looking barbarian soldiers, Arkissus, lesser tribune, next in command to Kaeso, and two lesser officers, enter. Arkissus wears a strange mixture of skins, armor, vine leaves and flowers. His face is flushed with wine, hair dishevelled, a wreath of yellow roses circles his helmet — a wine skin hangs on his shield. He goes towards the rose gardens, calling "Slaves! Slaves!" The lesser officers try to follow him but are helpless with drink and presently lie on the palace steps.*)

ARKISSUS (*Beating on his shield*). Snow, snow for Arkissus, fresh snow from Mount Ilda. I'll cure my drunkenness and drink again. (*Eyeing the altar maidens.*) By Odin-Thor! 'Tis sweet to the barbarian to rest in a woman's arms after long wars . . . to feel her fingers in his hair.

(*Catches a vestal's scarf. She screams.*)

NAGAR. Abraxas! Thou hast touched an altar maid! (*The vestals wail and retreat.*) Forty days, O Gods, since Kaeso and his barbarian horde entered the city. (*Kaeso has entered from the gardens, lost in thought. He is a man who is always plotting and brooding. He wears no helmet, but a chaplet of vine leaves in his hair. He catches the sound of his name and pauses.*) Kaeso, the sacker and looter. Naught is heard in our streets save the rolling of his chariots, and the laughter of the wanton Court. Kaeso, the reveller, is here.

KAESO. Thou hast said it, Nagar: I am a sacker and looter of cities, but reveller — not I. Kaeso the war lord is here. I am a soldier. Cry out my victories, prayer-monger.

NAGAR. Nay, blasphemer!

(*He passes off with the vestals.*)

KAESO (*In anger*). By Usk! (*A slave has entered from the gardens with a heaping dish of snow in which Arkissus buries his wrists.*) Are these my warriors? Up, up, get to the galleys, skulking wolves. (*The two drunken soldiers rise and stagger off.*) Arkissus — slave of wine and women! Beast! (*Kaeso dashes the cup of wine Arkissus is about to drink into his face. Arkissus leaps to his feet, almost sobered.*)

ARKISSUS. If I have fought for Kaeso, my Chieftain, fought from his chariots, galleys, long and hard, — 'twas not for this. Beast, am I? I have pledged my father's soul in hell to fight with thee till we pull down the walls of Rome, else . . . Who made me beast? If I am women's slave, who made me slave? Once there was a woman . . . who bade me forget her ere I spoke; for Kaeso must be served before his soldiers. Arkissus knew his place. (*Points to Kaeso.*) O, cunning fish that now swims in cold torrents, thy blood ran hot then in Arcady.

KAESO. I have done with Arcady . . . and with her. When I war again, 'twill be the Imperator of this land goes forth to battle.

ARKISSUS. Imperator? Thou? Here? And for this is the Princess Adrea forgot? What? Wed the wanton, Iulia Doma, to be Imperator of —

KAESO. — I shall have this harbor for my galleys — hence to hurl new legions against Rome and then the world.

ARKISSUS. But Iulia Doma? She is one of the furies. (*Struck.*) So this then is why we linger here in ease, we who came to battle. I see why thou hast shorn thy head — why thou art garland-decked. 'Tis Kaeso, the lover now, seeking to catch the fancy of this wanton. (*Music is heard in the palace and the sound of empty laughter.*) Her vile Court.

KAESO. All things for conquest.

MOCK HERALD (*Running on*). Bow, bow to King Mimus!

(*A small chariot of beaten gold is driven on by Mimus the Mimic, and pulling it are women. They prance on in a harness of flowers. Their shoulders are bare and their dresses are tucked up under the harness. Two girls are in the chariot. One lies on her back, kicking up her legs; the other sprawls so that her feet drag in the dust. Men follow them — princes or men of station. A drunken woman is carried in on the shoulders of two men. Others follow the chariot. All are utterly dissolute in appearance and scream with wild laughter from time to time. Mimus the Mimic, who drives the chariot, is the Court jester. He has a long face painted white and red in imitation of a tragedy mask. A baustable is thrust under his arm.*)

MIMUS (*Cracking his whip*). A-hi! A-he! A-heu! Ecce! Ecce!

MOCK HERALD. Give knee to the King of the Interregnum, King Fool!

MIMUS. My subjects: listen to the King's wisdom. Being Mimus the Mimic, I will but echo your own . . . Let no man love his wife. His friend shall love her — a perfect citizen prefers his friend before himself.

MOCK HERALD (*Proclaiming as he sits on the altar steps, embracing two wantons*). Edict!

NAGAR (*In the distance*). Woe!

MIMUS (*In perfect imitation*). Woe! (*The Court laughs.*) Remember death.

(*He jumps from the chariot as he is pelted with flowers.*)

KAESO. Peace, thou echo.

MIMUS (*In exact imitation*). Peace, thou echo. He, he! Ecce! (*One of the women, laughing, seizes Kaeso's helmet. Mimus takes it from her and puts it on. He assumes the very voice and attitude of Kaeso.*) I am Lord Kaeso, pondering (*putting his hand to his forehead*) how I can best take Rome — and then the world.

KAESO. By Thor!

(*A woman throws herself into Kaeso's arms, laughing. Iulia Doma, who has entered from the palace, flashes a look of rage at the woman.*)

MIMUS (*Warningly to the others*). Iulia Doma . . .

(*The woman retreats from Kaeso in fear.*)

IULIA (*To Mimus*). Give thy master — and my lover — wine.

IDMONDUS (*The Imperial Herald re-enters*). The ambassadors with tribute.

IULIA. Bring them before me. (*To all.*) Await their coming in the gardens.

MIMUS (*Imitating her*). Await their coming in the gardens . . . (*As Iulia, in fury, raises her hand to strike him, he kneels.*) Noble mistress . . . a jest. There lives not the bird of the air I do not mock. 'Tis my nature . . . a low vile echo.

(*He disappears.*)

(*The Court has passed off.*)

(*Arkissus, lying on his stomach, is now guzzling wine.*)

IULIA (*Caressing Kaeso*). Kaeso . . . Soon lord of my legions. . . . Ah! Make a fortress of my country — what thou wilt. "Imperial wanton" I was called before we met, "mistress of an hundred senators", they said; but only thee I love.

KAESO (*In disgust*). Ah!

IULIA. Drink, my Kaeso.

KAESO (*Pushing away her cup*). Nay, nay, I am sworn to conquer the world.

IULIA (*Rising*). Kaeso, thou art cold.

ARKISSUS. Ho, ho! He was not cold in Arcady.

KAESO. Arkissus!

IULIA. I know . . . You loved her, my sister, in my father's tents, when he warred in Arcady, I have heard.

KAESO. 'Tis three years since.

IULIA. But I could swear you love her still. (*Cries of "Adrea!" are heard.*) What? They cry out *her* name — not mine; an augur reads the omens against *me* and now Arkissus would remind me of —

KAESO. By Usk, Arkissus!

ARKISSUS (*Drunkenly*). 'Twas I loved her first. But he bade me step aside for him — and now, wine is my sweetheart.

KAESO. Peace, Arkissus. (*To Iulia.*) She was a part of her father's wars. I knew her, yes; but 'twas soon forgot.

IULIA. Not so, — I think you lie. Answer, Kaeso.

KAESO. She held sway over me in Arcady. That is the truth.

IULIA. A-ah!

KAESO. Yet mark: she did not keep me from my wars — nay, nor set my purpose back. I have not looked upon her once since I returned. For I am first the soldier.

MIMUS (*Entering*). The Princess Adrea's tiring woman, Garda. (*Garda enters. She has a sphinx-like face, and would pass by.*)

IULIA. Garda, what dost thou here? Answer.

GARDA. To-day my mistress goes to dwell in the temple of Nagar, to serve the altar and the lamps.

IULIA. Knowest thou my lord Kaeso, Garda?

GARDA. Ay.

IULIA (*Throwing her arms about Kaeso, kissing him again and again*). Go to thy mistress and tell her this . . . and this.

GARDA. I bring her only pleasant lies. She does not know Lord Kaeso woos again — his pledge to her unbroke. She wonders silently.

(*She goes.*)

(*Mimus sees the armor thrown down by a barbarian soldier, and plays with it, trying it on.*)

IULIA. Thy pledge unbroke . . . Then Kaeso knew me not; and now he looks to greater honors, wooing me. Kaeso would be the conqueror, the Imperator. I, Iulia Doma, I come to this? Nay, thou shalt tell Adrea face to face that thou dost love me — me! Thy pledge to her shall be broken. If she were Queen, thou wouldst not seek Iulia Doma.

KAESO (*About to drink*). Enough.

IULIA (*Striking the cup from his hand*). Ah!

IDMONDUS (*Re-appearing*). Daughter of Menethus, the ambassadors of foreign lands.

IULIA (*Looking angrily at Kaeso*). I have touched the truth at last. (*Dyaixes enters, followed by a servant bearing tribute. He salutes Iulia Doma. Ignoring the ambassadors, continuing her quarrel with Kaeso.*) Thou — thou —

BRAM-BORA (*Entering*). Most noble Princess Iulia.

(*Kaeso bows as Bram-Bora enters and prostrates himself. His slaves carry a gorgeous tribute.*)

MASLAK (*Entering*). To-morrow's Queen!

(*Kaeso salutes as Maslak prostrates himself. A slave bears his gift: an elephant's tusk decorated with gold.*)

(*Sylvestros enters, followed by a fair-haired boy bearing a cage of nightingales, a jewelled mirror of volcano spume, and a scroll of parchment. He is youthful, elegant, a model of Greek foppishness, his manner somewhat patronizing.*)

SYLVESTROS (*Saluting*). I am Sylvestros of Greece.

IULIA (*To Kaeso*). I have touched the truth.

KAESO (*Apart*). Sh!

IULIA. What? I, silent?

SYLVESTROS (*Puzzled*). A strange welcoming. . . . (*Men and*

women of the Court stroll on. Two drunken women try to drag the sleeping Arkissus to his feet.) I am the Prince of Sylvestros from Athens to the Coronation, with a jewelled mirror of volcano spume and a cage of nightingales.

KAESO (*Aside to Iulia*). Give welcome. My guard shall greet them as they feast.

(*He salutes the ambassadors.*)

SYLVESTROS (*As Kaeso passes off to the palace.*) I would make my salutation to the Princesses. (*Looking uncertainly about.*) Then to the bath.

IULIA. There is but *one* Princess here, I, Iulia Doma, tomorrow's Queen.

(*The ambassadors bow, some salaaming. Slaves lay the gifts down before her.*)

MIMUS. The blind Princess Adrea comes.

SYLVESTROS. Ah, I had *heard* there was another —

IULIA. There *is* another Princess of our house, Adrea the first-born — named for our land.

SYLVESTROS. First-born?

IULIA. Yea, but blind, — she may not reign. Lest they think I wrongly claim her crown, Idmondus, read the first law of our father, Menethus the Just — graved ere she or I was born.

IDMONDUS (*Bowing, kneels and reads the inscription on the base of the statue of the late King*). "Know all men, these, Menethus' laws, and as ye know them, heed. This, first: no state can live whose princes lack a perfect body with a perfect mind. Therefore, 'tis first ordained, no sovereign shall e'er sit my throne or wear my crown who is not in his mind and body sound."

(*The Aeolian harps cry out as though in protest.*)

SYLVESTROS. Was she not always blind?

IDMONDUS (*Rising*). She was not born blind, but on her day of birth, 'tis said she looked with naked eyes upon the naked sun.

(*The Aeolians are wind-swept, giving out a mournful sound, and at the same moment Garda enters, holding one end of a long leading string made of ribbon. Adrea appears, her eyes open,*

wearing a simple robe, a fillet and a long, filmy, blue gauze veil, thrown back. Behind her walk five maids. A slave holds a shade over Adrea's head and eyes. There is a hush as all look at her.)

(*As this group moves towards the altar, the Aeolian harps whisper an accompaniment.*)

ARKISSUS (*Half sober at the sight of Adrea*). She of Arcady whose face I would not see.

IULIA. Hold. (*To Garda.*) Stay, Garda.

ADREA. Oh, 'tis Iulia!

IULIA. Thou goest to the temple?

ADREA. Yea, to serve the altars of the gods.

IULIA. Thou wilt not pass this way again?

ADREA. Nay, to-day I make farewell to earth and whatsoe'er doth whisper of my youth; and in the going, I wish thee, Iulia — Garda, kneel — (*Garda kneels. All the maids kneel.*) I wish to thee a blessed, blessed reign. May thy people love thee always as I.

(*Holding out her arms as though she would have Iulia embrace her. Receiving no response, she hesitates, then patiently motions Garda to go on.*)

IULIA. Stay. Go not yet. There is one would speak with thee.

ADREA. Speak with me?

IULIA. Give first our guests a welcome. Noble ambassadors of strange lands are here before us.

ADREA. Oh . . .

(*Instinctively she arranges her garment.*)

GARDA (*Under her breath*). Wait not . . . 'tis ill.

ADREA. Nay, Garda, nay. Go. I will join thee.

(*Her maids retire.*)

IULIA (*To Idmondus, apart*). Tell my Lord Kaeso I would see him here — quickly — haste.

(*Idmondus goes.*)

ADREA. Ye Princes and Lords of your lands — (*to Garda*) Am I facing them?

GARDA (*Gently putting one hand on Adrea's face to turn it toward the guests*). So.

ADREA (*To Garda*). I feel their eyes upon me now. . . . (*Aloud.*) Here in our father's realm, I give ye welcome, Lords. I shall not stay, for I am but a shadow at the feast. (*Faint cries of "Adrea! Adrea!" are heard.*) I go to be forgot. But I commend ye to this fair new Court — (*The wantons laugh silently.*) I see it not, yet know it must be fair — and add my love . . . our love. O mighty Lords, we should be glad and rejoice, because to-morrow there will be a gracious Queen over Adrea. And so I say to ye farewell. Come, Garda, come. Hence. . . .

(*She starts to go.*)

MIMUS (*With a lordly air*). Pray, Princess Adrea, first accept our gifts.

ADREA (*Pleased*). Gifts? . . . For *me?*

GARDA. Nay, nay. Come, mistress, come.

ADREA. Nay, Garda, nay, wait.

MIMUS (*Seizing his fool's cap, leering at the Court, but speaking with formality*). This snood from sweet Arabia — 'tis cloth of gold.

(*Garda steps forward to seize the cap. She is motioned back by a threatening gesture from Iulia.*)

ADREA. I thank thee.

(*Mimus has knelt, taking Adrea's hand and kissing it. The Court silently mocks and jibes.*)

MIMUS (*Going up*). Gods! My lips do burn at sight of her.

ADREA. I shall not need a snood of cloth of gold; but I shall keep it and remember sweet Arabia. Garda.

(*Holds out her hand, expecting Garda to hold the cap, but Mimus takes it.*)

MIMUS. Princess, another gift.

GARDA (*Alarmed*). I will fetch Nagar to protect her.

(*She hastens away.*)

MIMUS (*Offers the cap again, imitating another's voice*). This purse from Caesar's Rome.

ADREA (*Taking it*). From Caesar's Rome . . . I thank thee.

MIMUS (*Handing her his baustable*). With a sceptre of a dead Queen from far Africa and a parchment scroll.

ADREA. Ah, 'tis sweet to find one's self so thought of . . . (*Touched — wipes her eyes with the cap.*) Garda?
(*Mimus takes the baustable.*)

ARKISSUS (*Angrily, as he rouses from his drunken stupor and would go to Adrea's defense*). By Usk!
(*The women hold him back.*)

ADREA. What says the parchment, Prince?

IULIA. 'Tis writ on love. Thou wilt not like it.

ADREA. Yea, if 'tis writ on love, I shall like it. (*With formality.*) Prince, I prithee read.

MIMUS (*Reads*). "Love is life while it remembers, love is death when it forgets."

ADREA. "Death when it forgets . . ."
(*Takes the scroll tenderly as though to cherish it.*)

IULIA. She keeps the scroll on love.
(*Mimus gives a shrill call of "Ecce! Ecce! Ecce!"*)

ADREA (*Frightened*). Ah! Garda, Garda, what thing is that?

IULIA. 'Twas but my Mimus, a fool, a mimic come to Court to cheat our ears with echoes of ourselves.

ADREA. A fool? A mimic? Our father had none such. . . . How looks he? What is he?

IULIA. A painted, hideous, gibbering thing in red and white; a dog from Pluto; an effigy of devils; not half a man.
(*The Court wantons laugh.*)

ADREA. Ah! Could I but see him, perchance I, too, would laugh.

MIMUS (*With a perfect imitation of Sylvestros in voice and manner*). I am the Prince Sylvestros, come from Athens.

ADREA. Most noble Prince.

SYLVESTROS (*In an undertone*). Savages! Worse than the Romans!

MIMUS. I bear a jewelled mirror.

ARKISSUS (*Coming between Adrea and Mimus*). By Skadi!
(*He seeks to wrest the mirror from Mimus, but, before he can do so, Adrea has it in her hand.*) I beg to make my homage to the most noble Princess Adrea, I, Arkissus of Arcady.
(*He kneels.*)

ADREA (*Joyfully*). Arkissus? Arkissus I knew in Arcady? Let me touch thee — Ah, 'tis true! (*As she touches his furs and helmet.*) The strong Arkissus, who twisted out the Numean lion's tongue for roaring at a child . . . Arkissus, soldier — Oh, I have held thee in my thoughts . . . Arkissus *they* pray for yet in Frisia . . . Arkissus, so gentle in Arcady . . . the brave Arkissus! (*Arkissus rises, as though her words had stung him. Adrea, stretching out her hand, feels his armor.*) I know that armor of Kaeso. . . . How long ago it seems . . . an echo of a dream that came and went. . . . (*Drawing Arkissus apart.*) I would know, Arkissus, if . . . if I am changed with waiting. . . . Look . . . if one who knew me then would know me — in the passing — now . . . Eheu. . . . (*A pause.*) Could I but see. . . . (*Holding up the mirror wistfully as though trying to look into it.*) Who flashed? A sword struck through mine eyes. O Gods, the light! The light!

(*Cries of "Adrea! Adrea!" are heard in the distance. Iulia rushes down, seizes the mirror and holds it up to Adrea.*)

IULIA. Look! Look! (*Takes Adrea's hand from her face and forces her to look into the mirror.*) Do you see?

ADREA. Nay, nay, I cannot see.

(*Iulia gives a breath of relief.*)

AUGUR (*Chanting in the distance*). "No god can alter what is written in the Book of Fate."

MIMUS (*Who has run out to listen to the Augur, re-enters in haste*). The Augur prophesies that she shall reign Queen.

(*Points to Adrea.*)

IULIA (*In thought*). Should Fate give her sight — now at the end. . .

ARKISSUS. In life, for death, (*kissing her hand*) most noble Princess Adrea.

(*He takes Adrea to the altar as though for safety. She kneels.*)

IULIA. Kaeso would turn from me as from her . . . (*Aloud.*) Come, we shall feast.

MIMUS (*Apart to Iulia*). The Augur's prophecy inflames the people.

IULIA. Zastus? (*Zastus, an Adrean soldier, enters.*) Take lictors and silence the Adrean scum with beatings. (*Zastus hastens away.*) Come, we feast in the Garden of Roses till dawn. Idmondus, the way.

(*At a gesture from Iulia Doma, the Court follows the ambassadors. Kaeso re-enters, wearing his armor — his face resolute. He stands listening to the cries of "Adrea! Adrea!".*)

KAESO. Arkissus, the guard! Look to the palace gates. Be wary!

(*Arkissus goes off.*)

IULIA (*To Kaeso — in a low voice*). End with her. End with her now. Break faith with her. Tell her thou art pledged in love to me.

ADREA (*Pausing in prayer and looking up, thinking herself alone*). Kaeso, I have waited . . . waited . . . but thou comest not . . . It is finished . . . The gods keep thee in peace, Kaeso.

(*With a low sob she covers her face with her hands.*)

IULIA. She forgets her gods for Kaeso. Break with her; else, by great Menethus' soul, thou shalt not sit his throne with me — Imperator! Tell her thou wilt wed a Queen.

KAESO. Yea, that I will. (*Facing Adrea.*) Then shall my oath be: I love not thee, Adrea — but Iulia.

IULIA (*Throwing her arms about him with a cry of savage joy*). Tell her.

(*She goes to the garden to join her guests.*)

MIMUS (*Making sure that Kaeso is not looking, eyes Adrea*). If I but dared . . . A fool's a fool to be a fool. He must see kisses, yet never kiss.

(*He runs off.*)

ADREA. Garda, Garda, take me hence. (*Kaeso goes to Adrea with sudden resolve — taking her hand.*) Garda, take me to the — (*Then feeling the strange hand, she glides her palm up his arm, at last touches her hand to his face — then calls out.*) Kaeso!

KAESO. Grace . . .

(*Kneels. Removing his helmet, he lays it on the altar.*)

ADREA (*Letting out a breath*). Ha-h!

KAESO. Turn to me but once — turn.

ADREA. I may not turn . . .

KAESO. Adrea, forgive me.

ADREA. Nay, ask it not.

KAESO. But I am here.

ADREA. Yea, and my heart doth yearn.

KAESO. Adrea —

ADREA. It knows not how to lie to thee, not after all the hurt, but —

KAESO. But —

ADREA. I may not turn to thee again. My face is set toward the temple to forget thee . . . O gentle Gods, bear witness!

KAESO. Adrea, since I have come into this land, a purpose has held me back. I am first of all a man who gains his end; and if, instead of seeking thee, I sat upon these shores and in my fancy captured every island of this sea and dreamed of victories, my sin was of my will, not of my heart.

ADREA. Why didst thou not leave me in my father's tents in Arcady — there where thou didst see me first — a blind creature who knew no love . . . naught but the crash and din of war? For alway my father fought — alway I followed . . . followed his battle over sands that burned my feet or trod on snows that chilled them . . . But I was happy — I knew no better life; my heart was never stirred, for I had not found thee.

(*Mimus re-enters and watches them.*)

KAESO. All the past comes back . . . Turn to me, turn.

ADREA. Nay.

KAESO. Forgive, Adrea, forgive me. I am by thy side again. Turn —

MIMUS. Mark now —

(*As he picks up the trailing leading strings in a far corner.*)

KAESO (*Pleadingly*). Turn to me, Adrea.

MIMUS. — how everything —

(*Still holding the leading strings.*)

KAESO. Turn.

MIMUS. — obeys its doom.

(*He drops the leading strings and darts off into the gardens.*)

ADREA. Nay, nay.

(*She sits on the garden bench.*)

KAESO. So thou didst look in thy father's tents.

ADREA. O Kaeso, Kaeso! Could we two go back to Arcady . . .

KAESO. Would that we could!

ADREA. Back to that land where first I knew thy love.

KAESO. I am here kneeling by thy side again.

ADREA. Back to that day —

KAESO. Peace, peace.

ADREA. That day when first my father lost a war. It was a summer day and all reeked blood and sweat . . . death was in the air and black despair in every heart . . . and out of it thou didst leap and led us from the trap, Kaeso the tribune. Gods, how we loved thee!

KAESO. Mine arms have held thee close, my lips have burned upon thy hands, thy face.

ADREA. Thou didst love me — 'twas enough that thou didst love me.

KAESO. Time was not time . . . days had no hours.

ADREA. The world had only just begun for me.

KAESO. I remember . . . Gods, I remember.

ADREA (*After a pause*). Then together we went homeward hand in hand. . . . My hair was blowing on thy face. . . . We laughed . . . we laughed. . . . The desert was no desert then. . . . The battle-field had bloomed. . . . The dead all smiled as if they died for us and joy. . . . And star grass of Parnassus clogged our happy, lagging feet, and violets of Ida flung their fragrance in the air. The blest Arabia seemed but just beyond. . . . Thou didst tell enchanting tales along the way of river gods who laughed to see us pass; of nymphs who kissed among the leaves; of cities all of purple shadows rising in the clouds; of groves of silver olives shining in the moon. . . . But when the lights of home were near, I laughed no more. I wept. For,

loving, we knew that we must part. . . . Then thou didst swear by all thy gods: "I will come back to make thee mine." And so . . . I waited . . . e'en as my father lay here dead, I waited. . . . And if the love is gone from out our lives, I wish that I lay dead in Arcady, sleeping beside thee there . . . each in the other's arms, asleep before the gods . . . waiting no more.

KAESO. Adrea . . . By Usk, the truth halts upon my lips. No battle hath uptorn my soul as this. Such as I am, I am — but believe this thing: thou art the only woman I have given love to in my life. Let the gods blast me where I stand if any other hold my heart. I love thee still.

MIMUS (*In the gardens, unheard by others*). Ha, ha, ha, ha, h-a-aa!

KAESO (*With purpose*). But —

ADREA. Nay, nay, Kaeso, leave it unsaid. . . . Nay, we will say thou hast come back . . . and all that kept thee from me, I would not know . . . I care not . . . thou hast come back. My hands have touched thee once again. I pardon all the waiting. It is forgot. Thou art here — still loving me; and 'tis enough, enough. Thou dost love me — say it, say it, say it once more.

(*Kaeso, who has left her, is standing apart, motionless; he does not notice what Mimus is doing.*)

MIMUS (*Who has crept up to Adrea in perfect mimicry of Kaeso*). I love thee.

ADREA. Ah, Kaeso . . . Kaeso . . .

(*The darkness begins to come — a faint sound of wind through the trees. Aeolians play louder — there is a peal of thunder, long and ominous, on all sides, as though surrounding the land.*)

MIMUS. Ha, ha, ha!

(*Runs off into the gardens.*)

ADREA (*Frightened*). An omen! An omen! The gods are angry — Why? Where art thou, Kaeso?

KAESO (*Coming to her*). I am here . . .

ADREA (*A shower of rose leaves flutters across the scene.*) The roses are blowing from the gardens . . . (*she has caught*

some of the petals in her hands) — the wind comes from the sea . . . cold . . . cold. . . . It is as though the summer ended now — and here. (*A second peal of thunder is heard, not as loud as the first.*) I feel the fates once more between us. Cling to me, Kaeso. Take me with thee . . . Take me with thee . . . Keep me . . . Keep me.

KAESO. Adrea!

ADREA (*Clinging to him*). Keep me.

KAESO (*Impulsively*). This in memory of Arcady, (*kisses her on the mouth*) where we pledged never more to part.

ADREA. Gods, I love thee! Thy soul meets mine after three years. . . .

(*Kaeso clasps her in his arms — they are oblivious to everything.*)

MIMUS (*Who has stolen back and stands envying Kaeso*). Oh, could I but —

(*He motions to some one off in the gardens — pointing to Adrea in Kaeso's arms. Iulia Doma appears.*)

(*Kaeso, starting, sees Iulia. He retreats from Adrea, the memory of Arcady departing. Mimus puts on some of the armor left by the drunken soldiers. He wears Kaeso's helmet and takes up his shield.*)

IULIA. Adrea! Adrea, where now is thy temple veil? Where now the gods thou didst seek to wed?

ADREA. Here. I want no other god. Kaeso!

(*She stretches out her arms and touches the shield which Mimus holds. Transfigured by love, she clasps the fool, who is encased in the armor, wearing his fool's cap under Kaeso's helmet.*)

IULIA (*A flash of malicious triumph coming over her face*). So be it. 'Tis thy choice. Forsake thy temple gods. (*Pointing to Mimus.*) Take thou this man thou lovest. That is thy fate. (*Kaeso, not fully comprehending Iulia Doma's purpose, looks at her, dumbfounded.*) Come, then, to the palace, come. The voice shall sing and the harp shall play for thee. The solemn marriage-hymn this night shall bind thee to him. . . . But the cost is this: ye both must pass my gates before the dawn. Thy choice will not find favor here.

KAESO (*Now fully realizing her awful intention — hoarsely*). Iulia!

ADREA. E'en though my feet are set without thy gates, Iulia, my blessing. (*Turning to the fool.*) Kaeso.

KAESO (*To Iulia*). 'Tis monstrous . . . and she is blind!

IULIA. Imperator! It is the price. Come, come to the marriage of the Princess Adrea and —
(*Pointing to the fool.*)

ADREA. Then, Kaeso, once again for us the battle tents.
(*Slips into the fool's arms.*)
(*Iulia and Kaeso retreat up the palace steps. Nagar is heard wailing in the distance: "Woe is Adrea!" The wind moans, a rumble of thunder is heard. Sunset falls upon the gardens. The palace is in the shadows as Adrea turns to go with Mimus.*)

CURTAIN

Part II

Between the falling and rising of the curtain, the night is supposed to pass. The orgy in the gardens is now at an end. It is the hour before dawn. The last of a thin, pale, silvery moon shines faintly. The altar fire burns low. On the palace steps two soldiers of the Adrean forces, Zastus and Galba, are watching.

ZASTUS. Who is there? (*To Galba.*) Is it the Egyptian woman again? Nay, 'tis not Garda. Speak quickly. Who comes?

BARGEMAN (*Stepping into view, carrying an oar, blade up, on which is fastened a red light*). The bargeman sent to await two who go forth at dawn.

ZASTUS (*Puzzled*). Who are these two?

BARGEMAN. I know not. I am bidden to wait.

UNSEEN SENTINEL (*Off*). The end of the fourth hour. The day breaks.

ZASTUS (*Looking off*). Arkissus comes.
(*Arkissus enters. The watch salutes him. He is followed by two barbarian soldiers; all are in full armor.*)

ARKISSUS. Iulia's Court still lies in the gardens . . . drunken

with wine. 'Twas a night of orgy to remember . . . all the city was uprisen . . . and we held it only at the spear's point.

GALBA (*Calling off*). Who is there?

ZASTUS. 'Tis the Egyptian, Garda.

GARDA (*Appearing*). All night they have kept me from the palace, and now 'tis dawn. Evil the hour when I stepped from my mistress' side to seek out Nagar. Heseb! Why is she in that palace of terrors — her slaves shut out from her? Nay, I shall enter.

ZASTUS. Tarry — you.

ARKISSUS. What is here?

GARDA. Arkissus!

(*Kneels to him.*)

ZASTUS. 'Tis the command of Iulia Doma that none enter the palace. More, we know not.

GARDA (*Weeping*). My mistress . . .

ARKISSUS. By Thun! (*To Zastus.*) Give way — let the Egyptian pass. Some evil is here.

GALBA, ZASTUS { (*Together, as Garda would enter the palace*). Hold!

ARKISSUS. Nay —

ZASTUS (*Attracted by a sound*). Sh — Kaeso . . . (*To Garda.*) Back — back. . . .

(*At a gesture from Zastus, Garda steps into the shadow, waiting. Zastus motions the bargeman to withdraw. Kaeso enters, walking slowly — he has been drinking — is dishevelled, pallid and troubled. He has the air of a man half distraught and dazed.*)

KAESO. Those harps . . . those harps . . . (*Calling.*) Silence! All night they have throbbed in tune to the marriage song. (*But the music continues. Pressing his hands to his temples, he falls into a seat. Seeing Arkissus.*) Arkissus, tell me . . . is that wing of the palace yet alight or did I dream as I lay there under the stars?

ARKISSUS. It is alight.

KAESO. Gods! Then I saw it through the wine . . . the face of Adrea shining from the window.

ARKISSUS. Evil upon thee if evil has been wrought. What holds her from the temple?

KAESO. All through the night watches, I heard the maddened Egyptian calling "Adrea." (*The voice of Nagar is heard in the distance, "Woe is Adrea."*) I heard the priests wailing in the streets.

ARKISSUS. Kaeso, give answer — answer! What holds her from the temple?

(*Kaeso bows his head in horror.*)

GARDA. He cannot answer. Heseb! I fear . . . I hear the marriage song again.

ARKISSUS. Marriage song? . . . But Adrea doth love thee, Kaeso.

GARDA. I questioned strange slaves who served the marriage meats . . . they dared not speak . . . terror was in their eyes . . . Arkissus, what could not happen in that palace!

ARKISSUS. Speak, Kaeso.

GARDA (*Who has picked up Mimus' baustable*). 'Tis this I fear.

ARKISSUS. The fool's bauble . . . You fear the fool? Nay, monstrous! I will enter the palace. I —

KAESO (*Intercepting him*). Dog out of Frisia! (*Arkissus puts his hand on the hilt of his dagger with a savage cry.*) Do you dare? I — your lord?

ARKISSUS. Ay, I dare all this dawn, for now — O Gods! 'Tis in your face — the truth is written in your face. The wanton . . . the wanton . . . It was the price fixed by the imperial wanton to make Kaeso —

KAESO. Ay, Imperator.

ARKISSUS. Now by the chaste heart of my mother, I follow thy leading no more. Strike not again the shield to summon *me* — here and now I throw mine down — and thus — and thus — and thus — I trample it beneath my feet. Henceforth I wield my sword but to avenge her of Arcady.

KAESO. By Usk of Caerleon!

ARKISSUS. Vengeance, Kaeso! By the point of my spear, the deck of my ship, the flank of my horse, — 'tis sworn: I cut the peace-strings of my sword for Adrea.

KAESO. Treason!

(*With his hand to his sword.*)

ARKISSUS (*Drawing his sword*). Blade for blade!

(*They come together with a savage cry, striking furiously at each other.*)

ADREA (*Heard in the palace*). Garda . . . (*Zastus and the soldiers hasten off. Their task is accomplished.*) Garda . . . Garda . . . Garda . . .

KAESO (*Backing off in horror to the gardens as though he could not bear the sight*). Adrea . . .

ADREA. Garda, where art thou?

(*Adrea has appeared at the top of the steps — terrified and dazed as though escaping something horrible, yet indescribable. She is in bed attire, which is almost transparent. She has gathered up the splendid crimson covering of her bed and comes on holding it before her. She wears a crown of pale pink roses, dishevelled — torn — faded. She speaks with the terror of a child who finds itself suddenly lost.*)

(*She comes staggering and stumbling down the steps — carrying no staff to guide her. Garda, hearing her call, rises to her knees, terror on her face, her arms outstretched.*)

GARDA (*Calling*). Aie, mistress.

ADREA. Garda, where art thou?

GARDA (*Coming to her — kneeling by her*). Here.

ADREA. Is it thou — or —

(*Shudders.*)

GARDA. Mistress, Princess, 'tis I.

ADREA (*Retreating from her*). — or art thou, too . . . a . . . some one — a something . . . I . . . I know not what? . . .

GARDA. It is I, Garda.

ADREA. No — no . . . How can I tell . . . The voices — all are strange . . . How can I tell . . .

GARDA (*Alarmed*). Mistress — feel my hand.

ADREA (*Half pushing Garda away*). I cannot feel . . . my hands have lost their cunning . . . they lie to me. I know thee not — I know thee not.

GARDA. Ah!

ADREA. I know not who — who . . . I am not sure . . . Away! (*Screams.*) Garda!

ARKISSUS. Are the gods of Adrea blind? (*Overcome by horror, in a half whisper, touching her.*) Adrea —

ADREA. No . . . No . . . Where is Garda?

GARDA (*Motioning away Arkissus*). Go, go. (*He passes off as though warding away the sight.*) Sh! 'Tis Garda, mistress.

ADREA. I stand alone . . . in the dark . . . afraid. I know not where I am . . . none I know about me. . . .

GARDA. Here am I — here. Mistress, 'tis Garda.

ADREA. I called for Garda, and all night a voice answered, yet she did not come. . . . The slaves all answered to their names — as though they were mine own . . . unseen shadows moving in the dark. (*Whispering.*) Some priest — a shadow — laid my hand in marriage in a shadow's . . . then all went away . . . all went away . . . and after . . . and after . . . and after . . . we two — alone . . . (*Her body trembling.*) The voice was Kaeso's, but the kisses . . . O Gods, the kisses! O Gods, the kisses! . . . I think I died. . . . Who was with me? Where was Kaeso? . . . Where is he now? Kaeso . . . Kaeso . . . Kaeso.

GARDA. Mistress —

(*Adrea, drawing back from her, reaches the statue of Menethus and kneels.*)

ADREA. O Father, Father, what is this monstrous thing I dare not name? Father, awake! I am Adrea . . . alone . . . afraid . . . I have been kissed by lips I do not know . . . hideous lips that blistered mine . . . I have been held by arms that — Father, give me sight . . . give me sight . . . give me sight and lead me to one man — (*Mimus steals on from the palace, dishevelled and no longer wearing his clown's costume*) that I may know who . . . I am numbed . . . I dare not think . . . I dare not think . . . Gods, give me sight — give me sight!

MIMUS (*As the bargeman appears*). We are the two who go forth — she and I.

(*Points to Adrea. The bargeman passes off. Garda sees Mimus whisper to the bargeman. She watches him.*)

ADREA (*As though she would tear the veil of darkness from her eyes*). Gods, give me sight!

MIMUS (*Softly — persuasively — but no longer in Kaeso's voice*). Dawn breaks . . . (*The sky now shows the faintest sign of the dawn.*) The time decreed for us to go. . . .

ADREA (*Turning at the altar. In a voice frozen with terror — almost in a whisper.*) Who speaks . . . who is this man they gave me to? . . .

GARDA (*Comprehending the full tragedy*). Ah!

ADREA. Answer . . . Answer. . . .

(*There is a slight pause; Garda beats her breast in silence.*)

MIMUS. Come.

ADREA. Nay, nay —

(*She staggers back from him.*)

MIMUS (*Who has picked up the leading strings which trail across the scene — speaking savagely as he attaches the strings to Adrea's wrist and winds them tightly about his own*). Come, come. Thou art mine — come.

(*He drags Adrea towards him — she totters, calling out: "No, no, no!" — grasps the altar as she is being dragged past it, and clings to it, calling "Father! Father!"*)

(*A stream of lightning, accompanied by a thunder bolt, darts from the dark sky and strikes down Mimus. He lies at a little distance from Adrea, the guiding strings still wound about his wrist.*)

(*The altar is overturned and shattered. Adrea, still clinging to it, falls, lying on it.*)

(*Stunned, her eyes closed, she puts her hands to her head. After a pause, she opens her eyes and looks about, vaguely comprehending that she sees at last. Presently she passes one hand before her face and stares at it.*)

ADREA. I see . . . I see . . . (*She looks about her at a strange world and suddenly notices that her guiding strings are held. She picks them up and follows them, still on her hands and knees. They lead her to the figure on the ground.*) You. . . .

(*She lifts up the unconscious body until her face peers into his.*)
Gods! Gods!
(*She lets his body fall. She draws a long breath of realization — swaying where she kneels.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

"Seek not thou to find thy fate.
'Tis following after thee."

SCENE: *The Tower of Forgetfulness. Three hours later.*

"*There were two doors to this tower, one, of Entrance, skirting the land; the other, of Release, overlooking the deep sea, neither ever closed.*"

SCENE: *An ancient and shadowy round tower, over the sea. At the back, reached by several stone steps and a landing, is the Door of Release — a wicket in it. Above it is the inscription in Roman lettering:*

"*O Mare, Tua Pax.*"

When this door is open, we see a dark slab, projecting out over the water. From this slab, those seeking release fall into the sea. The wicket is open and through it a mysterious light comes in, not illuminating the corners of the room which are always shadowy. A screenlike door leads to a primitive retiring room for the Master of the Tower. When this door is open, we see a stone table and seat, and above them flasks containing fluids set in niches in the wall. A round, small window is set high in the tower, just within reach, showing a vague glimpse of pale blue sky. In the centre, there is a stone resting place, with a head and foot piece and a footstool of stone in front of it. An altar is let into the wall; a light burns on it. The door to the tower is below and the stairs give entrance to this room.

A trumpet sounds faintly as the curtain rises.

The Servant of the Tower, a slight, pallid lad of twelve, with the air of never having been out of this place, is discovered at the door of

the Master's room. After a pause, he stamps gently on the floor with his sandal.

SERVANT OF THE TOWER. Master . . . 'tis long past the hour for the food-bearer.

VOICE OF THE MASTER OF THE TOWER (*Heard inside. The gentle voice of a man of memories*). He will come. He never fails. (*A faint cry is heard far below from some one coming up the stairs — "Way, way, way, way, way."*)

SERVANT OF THE TOWER. Hah! Some one calls. (*Looking down.*) Who is there? (*A pause through which Bevilaccas calls — "Way, way, way."*) Enter.

BEVILACCAS (*As his head appears*). I am Bevilaccas, the news-bearer. (*Presently his body is seen.*) Gods! Jupiter! I ne'er thought to see this place of death. (*Frightened, he cautiously sets down an earthen jar and an ewer of water.*) The food-bearer is stricken . . . and so I come. (*The Servant of the Tower puts the food in the Master's room.*) I may say now that I have seen the Tower of Forgetfulness . . . (*Shuddering.*) Jove's grave! Hast thou no fear here in this palace of terrors?

SERVANT OF THE TOWER. Nay, I have been here alway . . . My mother came to forget . . . and there (*points to the Door of Release*) went out to rest. This is my home.

BEVILACCAS (*Looking at the Door of Release, terrified*). Oh! (*A burst of trumpets sounds below in the distance.*)

SERVANT OF THE TOWER. What mean those sounds?

BEVILACCAS. The marriage of the wanton Princess Iulia to Kaeso of Noricum is proclaimed most suddenly e'er her crowning. . . . (*Looking about.*) Aecastor, what a place! . . . (*He turns toward the window through which a faint proclamation is heard: "Hear! By the grace of the gods, Iula Doma is united in marriage this day with Kaeso the Tribune!" The voice dies away in the distance.*) You will know by the bells when the marriage takes place. They return from the temple by the sea. The Senate, threatening, will not follow. . . . We, the people, detest the wanton.

They say she fears to lose her lover, and lest we rise against him, she will make him Imperator this day! . . . (*Staring into the corners.*) Hecatoea, a fearful place!

VOICE OF THE MASTER OF THE TOWER. Peace, peace . . . (*Appearing at the door of his room, hearing Bevilaccas.*) Those who come hither to forget the world are welcome. . . .

BEVILACCAS (*Awed, retreating from the sound of the voice. Pointing down*). List!

GARDA (*Below on the stairs*). Who keeps the Tower?

SERVANT OF THE TOWER. One is below.

BEVILACCAS (*Crouching down to look*). A woman . . . her face is veiled. . . .

SERVANT OF THE TOWER. Master, one comes to forget.

(*He waves Bevilaccas away.*)

GARDA'S VOICE (*Nearer*). Who keeps the Tower?

(*The Master of the Tower advances into the light and waits. He is seen to be a very old man of great dignity.*)

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Enter. There is no bolt nor bar upon the Tower of Forgetfulness.

(*Garda comes up the stairway — throwing back her veil.*)

GARDA. My mistress waits below. She would enter.

(*Bevilaccas hastens down the stairs and off.*)

MASTER OF THE TOWER. As she wills, so must it be.

GARDA. This peace she seeks here . . . is it . . . as 'tis said, a thing that —

(*Shudders.*)

(*The Servant of the Tower goes into the Master's room.*)

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Below the sea flows. 'Tis simple.

GARDA (*Frightened*). O, Heseb!

MASTER OF THE TOWER (*Without turning*). Even now . . . she comes.

GARDA. Aie! (*Calling down in agitation*). Mistress, come not here.

MASTER OF THE TOWER (*Listens, yet without turning*). Her step is measured . . . sure . . . portending a tragedy. . . . The fates have worked swiftly. . . . We shall know. (*Adrea appears, upheld by two maids. Their heads are veiled and their*

eyes downcast. We can see her pale face through her veil. She wears the same night robe in which we last saw her. Over this robe, Garda has cast her own cloak. The withered flowers are still in Adrea's hair. She draws back her veil; then after a slight pause, Garda dismisses the maids. They bow and disappear sadly. Garda has stepped forward and now stands by Adrea's side. Adrea leans upon her. She is already dead so far as her wish to leave the world is concerned. . . . She uses her eyes but little, resting them by looking down.) Comest thou with unalterable purpose to this death? (*Adrea, without raising her head, bows slightly.*) Hast thou just cause to die? (*Adrea acquiesces as before.*) Then I do my duty as I tell thee there is a time to be born, to die, to pass the judgment seat. The gods take us not before our tale of life is told. . . . But when, of our own choosing, we *will* to go, then should we prepare to meet the princely company of gods with such grace that we may find them smiling, fair, serene, no shadow on their laurelled brows. . . . (*Adrea silently covers her face with her hands.*) Again, hast thou thought well on this?

ADREA. Yea. The welcome chill of death e'en now is in my veins. I would stretch out my hand and lay it in some god's, who will give me . . . forgetfulness . . . eternity.

MASTER OF THE TOWER. So thought I once; yet found I rest and e'en a balm, — time.

ADREA. A day may be a thousand years . . . a thousand years a day. Time . . . What is time?

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Wilt leave no name behind thee? (*Adrea shakes her head. To Garda.*) Then lead her to the waiting stone.

GARDA. Mistress, nay . . .

(*Adrea goes up, leaning on Garda, who, shaking her head, protests, saying "Nay . . . nay, mistress." At the stone step, Garda kneels, offering her shoulder. Adrea sits, her arms outstretched on the seat. Garda kneels at the foot of the couch.*)

MASTER OF THE TOWER (*Pointing to the stone*). They lie at rest upon that stone. I bind their heads with solemn bay for expiation . . . they take a cup with me and sleep; then

heavy with these weights, (*pointing to weights which lie at the foot of the stone*) I send them down to rest below the waves. I will prepare the cup.

(*He goes into his room.*)

ADREA. A wondrous peace hath fallen on me as though the sea had risen up and up and put out all the fires in my heart. Look in my face — see. . . . (*Raises Garda's face between her hands — Garda weeps.*) Nay, nay, weep not. So remember me . . . smiling, unawed, and saying all is well. At the end, all things are well. (*To Garda, waving her away.*) Go, go.

GARDA. Nay, I will not go.

ADREA. Sh! (*Puts her fingers on Garda's lips, her voice now tremulous, almost in a whisper.*) 'Tis best, for I would sleep. (*She strokes Garda's hair, feigning a little gaiety.*) We shall part but little sooner. I shall have many neighbors there below. I shall not be alone. . . . Why dost thou weep?

GARDA. Oh! Oh!

ADREA. But I shall be with friends. Yea, there, in the yellow Tiber, below the waves, are yet the heroes thou so oft didst tell me of in childhood . . . saying I should one day meet them face to face. Why, Garda, in this sleeping shadow-city of the dead, I shall be near those I know. . . . (*Smiling.*) There Hector in his golden corselet lies . . . and Horatius, who kept the bridge. There rest the horsehair helmets of the Greeks who went to death as eagerly as children out to play. . . . And good Lucrece and . . . and . . . (*trying to think*) countless nameless ones thou didst tell me of, who, loving, lost and losing, slept. . . . Oh, I shall have lusty lovers near my bed. . . . But in that place they do not speak of love, nor anything, save pity. (*She kisses Garda.*) Go, go, Garda, go.

GARDA. Nay —

ADREA. Oh, I can bear no more. The cup, the wreath, the weights. Ye hold me back — ye hold me back, Garda. (*The music of the marriage song is heard below and the wedding bells sound through it.*)

(*The Servant of the Tower re-enters with a light which he sets at the foot of the couch.*)

GARDA (*To herself*). E'en now Kaeso weds with Iulia Doma! Isis be thanked, she knows it not.

(*The Master of the Tower has entered. The Servant of the Tower goes to the altar for the wreath which he gives to Garda.*)

ADREA (*Listening to the bells*). Some one is joyous to-day. Sh! . . . Ye hear? Joy still lives . . . (*she touches the flowers in her hair*) and marriage roses of last night — (*In revulsion.*) Ah! (*She tears them off.*) Not dead. . . . Ah, not dead. . . . They should be dead . . . and I — (*Garda has taken the wreath from the Servant of the Tower and binds it on Adrea's head.*) Gods! Hear the marriage song. . . . Hot, awful fears beat in my heart, burning, choking me. . . . That Kaeso knew . . . Nay, all my soul cries out against it; and then — Gods, I cannot think. (*By this time the wreath is fastened. The Master of the Tower has brought the death robe from the altar.*) I will not think . . . I will not have it so . . . Nay, he did not know — Kaeso did not know. (*The Master of the Tower and Garda put on the death robe. Adrea is dazed by her memory of the night before.*) . . . I was a King's daughter of the house . . . of . . . of Menethus . . . and I was saying . . . saying . . .

GARDA (*Continuing her task*). Of the house of . . . Menethus, yea, mistress.

(*The Master of the Tower has motioned the Servant of the Tower away. He kneels.*)

ADREA. Yea . . . yea . . . a Princess in my father's halls. . . . So proud was he, he had an hundred horses in his stables . . . and the number of his chariots was not known. . . . Yet — in wantonry — they gave me to a . . . I thought his arms the arms of him I loved . . . and here am I . . . It seems a thousand years ago and yet there is no rent in all my garment and the sandal on my foot is not e'en worn. . . . Oh, no heart was e'er torn and torn and torn like mine. (*She collapses suddenly.*) The bay wreath.

GARDA. 'Tis set.

(*Adrea puts up her hand to find the bay wreath.*)

ADREA. The weights . . . (*The Servant of the Tower hands them to Garda. The Master of the Tower clasps the death weights on Adrea, assisted by Garda. The Servant of the Tower hands the death cup to the Master of the Tower.*) The cup.

(*The Master of the Tower gives Adrea the cup.*)

(*The Servant of the Tower has gone up to the altar, and is now kneeling.*)

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Drink of this cup and sleep, pray. (*Adrea takes the cup, sinking to her knees. The Master of the Tower goes to the altar, kneeling. Garda crouches, her face in her hands. The ringing of the bells increases in sound. The Master of the Tower begins to pray in a low voice.*) O Sun, who surveyest all the works of earth with thy beams, and thou also, O Juno, conscious witness of these cares, and thou, O Hecate, howling through the cities in the nightly crossways, and ye, avenging Furies, receive these and turn a deserved regard to woes, and hear my prayers. Dear remains! While the fates and the gods permit, receive this soul. I have lived and I have finished the course which fortune gave me and now my shade shall rest under the sea.

ADREA. Father! Father! Thou who hast come to me in the watches of the night, be with me now. . . . (*The bells stop ringing. She drinks. A short pause. She drops the cup and sinking lower, invokes the shade of her father, by striking the ground.*) Shade of my father . . . King! Hold out thy hand to me. 'Tis Adrea who calls thee. Answer . . . Answer . . . (*The cup has almost overcome her. A strange light falls upon her.*) Garda . . . Garda. . . . (*She stares straight before her as though looking out of a dream. Leaning forward, she picks up a torch and peers into space. Then in the far-away voice of one who talks in sleep.*) See'st thou no spirit in the tower?

MASTER OF THE TOWER (*To Garda*). She but dreams.

ADREA. Garda . . .

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Answer . . . do not rise.

GARDA. I see the faint light shining, and I see thee in it — no more.

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Pray.

(*Garda bows her head.*)

(*He murmurs his prayer again.*)

ADREA (*Peering forward, holds the torch till it dips to the floor and puts itself out. . . . The scene is dark, all the figures are wiped out save Adrea's. A spirit light now develops and Adrea sees the Shade of Menethus, but it is only seen by Adrea*). Father . . .

(*The voice of the Shade of Menethus is low and has a far away sound.*)

THE VOICE OF THE SHADE OF MENETHUS. Adrea . . .

ADREA (*Speaking as though in deep sleep, no expression in her voice*). Royal Sir, wilt thou meet me in Elysium?

THE VOICE OF THE SHADE OF MENETHUS. Nay, 'tis not thine hour. Though thou dost seek the sea, 'twill spew thee forth again. Thy name is written in the Book of Fate as one whom destiny hath set apart to reign.

ADREA. Nay, Father — not that.

THE VOICE OF THE SHADE OF MENETHUS. Thou who wast blind, hath sight. No god can alter what is written in the Book of Fate.

ADREA. Again . . . the oracle . . .

THE VOICE OF THE SHADE OF MENETHUS (*As the spirit light begins to fade*). Look thou and listen. . . .

(*The spirit light disappears.*)

ADREA (*Calling after the light*). Father!

(*The room is in darkness for a second, then the altar light flares up, and Adrea is seen lying on the couch, her head on the head-rest, as though dead.*)

(*The Master of the Tower, still murmuring prayers, now rises, coming forward.*)

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Open the door. (*Two black slaves enter and kneel at the back — one carries a torch. The Servant of the Tower throws open the Door of Release. As the*

Master of the Tower prepares to fasten Adrea's wrists with iron bracelets.) Queen of the dead, O Proserpine, I give thee yet another soul.

ADREA (*Rousing and half sitting*). Look thou and listen. (*A trumpet sounds below on the water.*)

GARDA. Stay! (*Wipes the sweat from Adrea's forehead.*) She wakes. (*The wedding song is heard below on the water — a trumpet sounding at the same time.*) 'Tis Kaeso . . . wedded to the wanton.

ADREA. Who comes forth from marriage with royal trumpets of the King . . . Iulia!

MASTER OF THE TOWER (*Gently*). Peace. (*The savage battle song of Kaeso is heard on a galley below, the Battle Song of Noricum.*)

ADREA. The Battle Song of Noricum. . . . A cold sweat comes o'er me that drives the stupor from my veins. . . . (*The bells sound again.*) Kaeso!

GARDA. Mistress, 'tis true.

ADREA. He knew they gave me to a ——

GARDA (*Grovelling at Adrea's feet*). He knew.

ADREA. He knew . . . Gods, he knew! Nay, thou liest! He knew it not — I will not have it so . . . I will not have it so. He kissed me on the mouth in memory of Arcady. He did not know . . . He did not know . . .

GARDA. Yea — to wed a Queen.

ADREA. Garda, I think thou hast thrust a sword into my heart. (*At the moment, Kaeso is heard singing The Battle Song of Noricum.*)

GARDA. Mistress, do not listen.

ADREA. He who wrought my spoiling sings his marriage song below and I die here. . . . Nay, nay — it is not Kaeso. . . . There . . . Look . . . Look . . . Look . . . Look . . . Look . . . (*Garda goes up to the Door of Release.*) My heart . . . my heart . . .

GARDA (*Looking down*). 'Tis Kaeso.

ADREA (*Despairingly*). Nay, nay.

GARDA. Iulia Doma in his arms . . .

(*The galleys are now supposed to be passing almost under the Door of Release.*)

ADREA. Nay, nay. (*At this moment, there comes up from below a long, joyous, tormenting laugh, which is terrible in its mockery and triumph. It is Kaeso laughing. With a choking cry, Adrea claps her hands over her ears to shut out the sound.*) That laughter — 'tis Kaeso's . . . Gods, shut it out! (*The two slaves go up and close the Door of Release. The room is silent. Adrea, looking from side to side and seeing the slaves kneeling, begins in a low voice.*) Why do ye kneel there . . . like stones? Rise ye! (*All rise.*) Rise ye and call with me on all the furies and the fates.

GARDA
MASTER OF THE TOWER } *Together.* { Mistress. / Peace.

ADREA (*With a sweeping gesture of appeal*). Gods of the households! Gods of the lands! And ye . . . Gods of the dwellings below — vengeance! Vengeance on this man! Infest him — leave him not. Dirae, Goddess of Hatred — Atte, Goddess of Revenge, malediction! Malediction!

MASTER OF THE TOWER. Peace . . . peace . . . peace.

ADREA. For every lying word of love, the pangs of hunger to his tongue; for each false kiss upon my mouth, a serpent's poisoned sting. May he — a soldier — know a coward's fear every hour, every hour — here — (*putting her hand on her heart*) cold, awful, sweating terror in every battle . . . fear that shall rise shuddering up from the shades of hell —

MASTER OF THE TOWER. What words are these?

ADREA. — till some foul, festering ditch where dogs are cast, receives his agony! (*Spent — fairly bowing under her words — almost in a whisper.*) Malediction! Malediction!! (*Rising.*) Father, I take thy throne . . . Kaeso . . .

(*All kneel, realizing that they are in the presence of the Queen.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

The Coronation of the Queen.

Five hours later on the same day.

SCENE: *One end of a Coronation Hall — the entire back of which opens through fluted columns on to a marble esplanade which faces the open sea. The floor is marble. There are no furnishings in this hall, save a throne with a dais and stone seats for the Consuls, Magistrates, and Elders, with a table on which are a number of rolled petitions, some with seals attached, all opened. Out of sight, through an opening, the Senate Hall continues. There is a small door below the throne. The room looks very old. There is an air of simple dignity about it.*

It is near midday. The sun is strong. The sky is deep Oriental blue and cloudless. There are a few galleys with pennants to be seen in the distance, on the sea.

Trumpets sound as the curtain goes up.

Zastus and Galba stand at the back. The Consuls and Magistrates are grouped behind the table — no man younger than forty-three.

Marcus Lecca, the chief Consul, Princeps-Senatus, most distinguished in bearing, is glancing at a parchment in his hand. His colleague, Caius Valgus, second Consul, is younger. These two Consuls have chairs near the throne, one on each side, which they occupy later. They both wear the Imperial laurel wreath tied with white ribbon.

All through this act, sounds off the stage must convey the impression of a city in holiday spirits, with streets filled and patriotism in the air.

As the sound of trumpets dies away, a venerable man, the Herald of the Senate, enters with two petitions.

HERALD OF THE SENATE. To the most reverend, the Consuls and the Senate: petitions, greetings.

MARCUS LECCA. Lay them before us. (*The Herald of the Senate obeys and passes into the Senate Hall. Marcus Lecca rises as though reading the conclusion of the parchment, elevating*

his voice so that it can be heard in the distant end of the hall.) Senators, (*then to the three near him*) Magistrates, Elders: it is an auspicious day for the crowning of the illustrious Adrea. Here are felicitations from Clovis of far Gaul and from all Carthage — (*sweeping his hand over the rolls of parchment*) good prophecies . . . double greetings from the Greeks near the Hellespont and the desert Persians. (*The Page of the Senate takes the scroll into the Senate Hall.*) But from Kaeso, the barbarian tribune, now lord of Iulia Doma, we have no sign of submission. (*Giving a parchment to the Page of the Senate as he passes him.*) Naught. This man thrice warned to leave our shores, e'en now hath received our precept commanding his presence here.

VOICE (*From the distant end of the hall*). It is well done, Marcus Lecca.

(*Magistrates and Elders turn in their seats to look toward the unseen Senator.*)

ANOTHER VOICE (*From the Senate*). Ay.

(*Other voices take it up.*)

CAIUS VALGUS. Mark with what relentless purpose the noble Adrea will begin her reign. She speaks of naught but punishment of our enemy, Kaeso.

(*Cries of "Adrea!" "Salve!" "Hail, Adrea!" are heard off.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Zastus, send out lictors to keep the people back.

BEVILACCAS' VOICE (*Heard off*). Way, way, way for Bevilaccas.

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*Re-appearing*). A messenger from the people approaches, Lords and Consuls.

(*Bevilaccas appears; breathes as usual from fast running.*)

BEVILACCAS. Master, may the voice of the Citizens be heard through Bevilaccas, the licensed news-bearer?

MARCUS LECCA. What would the Citizens?

BEVILACCAS (*Laying a scroll upon the table*). Pageantry, feasting and rejoicing that Adrea is come to the throne.

NAGAR (*Entering*). Give pause.

MARCUS LECCA. Greetings to Holy Nagar.

(*All bow.*)

NAGAR. Lords, I have seen her. . . And I come to bid ye haste the crowning; to warn the Magistrates that they make not separate oath; my flamen that they chant not . . . for Adrea comes suddenly as one from out a darkened room. (*Prophetically.*) Lo! I have seen her soul . . . There is nor joy, nor triumph there . . . naught but consternation.

MARCUS LECCA. Then 'tis the strange light of day hath done this.

NAGAR. Mayhap. Therefore the briefest oath. 'Twere an ill omen were she not crowned to-day.

MARCUS LECCA. It shall be so. (*Nagar leaves the hall.*) Galba, send heralds among the people, saying: "To-day, the simple oath, nor more — to-morrow, magnificence, pageantry and feasting for three days — in the Queen's name."

(*Galba goes out.*)

(*Bevilaccas, staggered by this splendid promise, rushes off, calling "Way, way, way," into the distance.*)

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*Re-entering*). Arkissus begs the Consuls' and the reverend Senate's leave to enter.

(*Arkissus appears in full armor, grave, dignified, no longer a reveller.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Arkissus, Legate to Kaeso, what brings thee before us in the armor of an enemy?

ARKISSUS. I come, Marcus Lecca, as a friend, and begging leave to serve this land.

MARCUS LECCA. What? Arkissus the barbarian begs leave to serve our land?

ARKISSUS. I have an hundred men who followed me from out the north and follow still . . . all skilled in fighting from chariots. I know well the craft of war and ye have present need of a leader. What answer, Lords?

MARCUS LECCA (*Sternly*). But thou dost serve Kaeso.

ARKISSUS. No more. I threw down my shield . . . last night.

CAIUS VALGUS. What reason?

A MAGISTRATE. What reason?

MARCUS LECCA. What reason?

ARKISSUS. A woman's name stops my answer.

MARCUS LECCA. We have need of a leader. But doth the great Arkissus of Frisia set a trap for us?

CAIUS VALGUS. By what oath can we bind him?

ARKISSUS. By thine own Mars.

CONSULS. Nay, nay!

MARCUS LECCA. Mars is not thy god.

ARKISSUS. Then will I give grass and earth as emblems of submission.

(*He takes a handful of earth and grass from a pouch at his side and lays it on the table.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Yet do I not trust thee.

ARKISSUS. I have a mother who is old and cries to look upon me — a sister who is young and fair. I will send for them, and ye shall hold them hostage. (*Marcus Lecca, impressed, turns to others.*) To her, to-day thy Queen, I offer my sword — and if she doth say me nay, I set sail for Frisia to-morrow.

MARCUS LECCA. The matter shall be put before her . . . Wait.

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*Entering excitedly*). My Lords — my Lords —

(*Iulia Doma sweeps in, her arms outstretched in invective. She is dishevelled, her mantle thrown hastily about her. Grim disapproval is seen on the faces of the Consuls and others; they do not salute her.*)

IULIA DOMA. Oh, infamous! Infamous! Is mine own to be wrested from me? The throne of Adrea stolen? 'Tis not true. My sister hath not looked upon the light. She is blind — she deceives ye all. She dare not sit my father's throne. Ye break my father's law.

MARCUS LECCA. We have looked upon her — she on us. . . . We do keep Menethus' law — she sees.

CAIUS VALGUS. Ay, she sees.

IULIA DOMA. Sirs of the Senate, my wrong shall reach the lands where live our enemies. I follow my Lord Kaeso. His legions shall yet sweep ye from those seats. Look to it!

(*Kaeso enters in armor, an inscrutable expression on his face. He makes a movement towards Iulia Doma as though to urge her to keep silence.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*Sternly*). Enough.

CONSULS (*Rising*). Enough.

KAESO (*To Iulia*). Peace.

(*Adrea's name is called off by many voices to convey the impression that she is seen in the distance.*)

IULIA DOMA. Ah! Hear their cries . . . (*To Kaeso.*) My Lord, I and my people wait. Come, come.

(*She sweeps off.*)

KAESO. Sirs, Consuls, ye have summoned me. Speak my offending — then grant me leave to go with such of my men as await me at these gates.

ARKISSUS. Ay . . . such as await thee.

MARCUS LECCA (*Aside to the Consuls*). Mark well.

KAESO. Arkissus of Frisia, we shall meet again.

ARKISSUS. Speed the hour, Kaeso of Noricum.

(*They come together, clashing their shields, their swords uplifted.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*Rising. Sternly*). Hold! Lay down thy shields. (*Arkissus, bowing as though asking pardon, goes up, laying down his shield. To Kaeso.*) Lay down thy shield.

KAESO (*Defiantly — turning to go*). Nay —

MARCUS LECCA. Stay, Kaeso: thou art summoned at the will of Adrea.

KAESO. By the Queen? By Adrea?

MARCUS LECCA. Therefore we may not give thee leave to go. Remain.

KAESO (*As though to see how much they know*). My offending?

MARCUS LECCA. Kaeso stands before us in full armor without submission. An enemy to Adrea — wedded to an enemy — a menace whose chariot wheels are clogged with Adrean blood. (*As Kaeso starts to go.*) Wait! 'Tis for the Queen to judge Kaeso's offending.

(*Zastus and Galba come down quickly and take Kaeso's sword and shield.*)

(*Cries of "Adrea" come nearer. A trumpet sounds.*)

ZASTUS. The Queen's galley appears.

HERALD OF THE SENATE. Lords of the Senate: the ambassadors of foreign lands.

(*Sylvestros and the other ambassadors enter, bow to the Senate and stand.*)

(*Music is heard outside and cries of "Adrea."*)

SYLVESTROS. Greetings.

MARCUS LECCA. Greetings, Lords and Princes.

(*Zastus is heard ordering the people to stand back.*)

(*The Augur, now vine-crowned and wreathed, carrying a curved rod, his face prophetic, prayerful, comes forward, holding up his hand.*)

(*All bow low. The Augur passes off.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*To the Herald*). Bid the people keep silence.

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*Passing off*). Silence in the name of the Senate, silence!

THE VOICE OF ZASTUS (*Off*). Back from the barriers.

(*A trumpet sounds and the national anthem is played. It conveys the message of the burden of ruling. A faint "A-ah" of sympathy comes from the people, the same sound one makes when seeing something that excites affection and pity. Nagar appears, followed by the flamen in white robes blowing their horns. They take their places below the throne. Zastus and Galba enter with standard bearers, followed by others; among them, the Slave of the Whips, a black African, who kneels above the throne. He is a Numidian, almost naked, leather pieces on his knee and his whip hand.*)

(*Four Adrean guards enter, followed by a slave who carries the step to the throne chariot.*)

(*A splendid throne chariot is now drawn on by four Negro slaves. In it, Adrea sits with Garda. Four maids follow the chariot.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Lords and Senators, now is Adrea, daughter of Menethus, come to her crowning — the daughter of a King of Kings, first-born, absolute, triumphant.

(*Marcus Lecca and Caius Valgus assist Adrea to descend from the chariot.*)

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*Calling off*). Now is Adrea, the daughter of Menethus, come to her crowning — the daughter of a King of Kings, first-born, absolute, triumphant.

MARCUS LECCA (*A jewelled sword in his hand*). Remember:

with this sword did great Menethus make all men keep his laws.

(*Adrea touches her hand to the sword.*)

(*Nagar leads Adrea forward; Garda follows, holding a long-handled, fanlike shade above Adrea to protect her eyes from the sunlight falling from the great dome. The other maids follow.*)

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*After a pause — standing in the chariot*). Doth any challenge the crowning of Adrea, of Adrea the first-born daughter of Menethus?

A HERALD (*Heard outside*). Doth any challenge the crowning of Adrea, of Adrea the first-born daughter of Menethus?

HERALD OF THE SENATE. None doth challenge Adrea's right to reign.

(*The music comes to an end.*)

(*The Adrean phalanx enters at back and takes its place.*)

ADREA (*To Garda*). Kaeso . . . where is —

GARDA. Sh! He is here.

(*Nagar has a parchment with a golden clasp, which he holds before Adrea.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Adrea, swear thou by thy father's gods to keep the laws of this land above all else?

NAGAR (*Prompting, under his breath*). I . . . I . . .

ADREA (*Her mind bent on Kaeso*). I swear. . . . Where art thou, Garda?

MARCUS LECCA (*Pointing to the parchment in Nagar's hand*). Then shall Adrea read the oath by which her father swore.

ADREA (*Simply*). I cannot read.

MARCUS LECCA. Pardon, I had forgot.

(*He takes the parchment from Nagar.*)

CAIUS VALGUS (*Explaining to the Consuls*). Her sight came but to-day.

MARCUS LECCA (*To the Senators*). By your grace, Lords and Elders, I will read the words.

ADREA (*Aside to Garda*). Where? . . . I see him not . . . I see him not. . . .

NAGAR (*Striking the floor with his rod twice*). Hear!

(*The flamen blow their horns.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*Standing back of Adrea is seen to prompt her softly, but his voice is not heard*). I, Adrea —

ADREA (*Beginning, repeating after him — prompted*). I, Adrea —

MARCUS LECCA. By the grace of the gods —

ADREA. By the grace of the gods —

MARCUS LECCA. Called to rule over this land —

ADREA. Called to rule over this land —

MARCUS LECCA. Victorious — (*Repeats as she does not answer.*) Victorious —

ADREA (*Always looking for Kaeso*). Victorious —

MARCUS LECCA. Absolute —

ADREA. Absolute —

MARCUS LECCA. Triumphant —

ADREA. Triumphant — (*She sighs wearily. To Garda, aside.*) Where, Garda? . . . Where? Mine eyes see not far. . . .

GARDA. He stands there.

(*Adrea looks as though following Garda's touch.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Swear to punish wrong —

ADREA. Swear to punish — (*Adrea now sees Kaeso. Under her breath.*) Kaeso . . . Is that Kaeso?

MARCUS LECCO (*Aside to the others — quickly*). She droops. . . .

CAIUS VALGUS. She droops. . . . Haste.

ADREA (*Aside to Garda*). Is that Kaeso?

GARDA (*Low*). Yea. . . .

ADREA. Ah!

CAIUS VALGUS (*Aside*). She trembles. In mercy, give the oath.

MARCUS LECCA. Holy Nagar, the oath.

NAGAR (*To Adrea*). Swear.

MARCUS LECCA. Swear to punish wrong.

ADREA (*With feeling — hand uplifted*). I swear to punish wrong against my country — and myself, with hand of iron and with heart of stone.

NAGAR (*Striking the floor with his staff*). It is sworn.

(*A page enters with a cushion of state, places it before Adrea and retires. The Herald of the Senate follows, bearing a jewelled crown and sceptre on a gorgeous cushion, and kneels. All this is done as Nagar has exclaimed: "It is sworn!"*)

(*As Adrea sees the crown, she kneels. A maid removes her fillet.*)

(*The following is said in unison, Nagar calling out as Marcus Lecca speaks.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*Lifting the crown*). Be it known to all —

NAGAR (*Invoking the gods*). Look down!

MARCUS LECCA. This day and hour —

NAGAR. Hearken!

MARCUS LECCA (*Places the crown on Adrea's head*). We crown —

NAGAR. O Gods of her father —

MARCUS LECCA. — the first-born daughter of Menethus — daughter of a King of Kings —

NAGAR. Behold!

MARCUS LECCA. — Queen over Adrea.

NAGAR. Hear! Hear! (*He strikes the floor with the rod; then with his hand uplifted.*) O ye high Gods who have watched o'er the house of Menethus for a thousand years — ye know how brief is greatness. (*Placing his hand on Adrea's head in benediction.*) Give peace to her land, rest to her heart. May her word be absolute, (*Marcus Lecca and Nagar assist her to rise*) triumphant.

MARCUS LECCA (*Putting the sceptre in her trembling hand*). 'Tis done.

(*Music sounds and the royal trumpets are heard. All kneel, save Nagar, the Queen and Kaeso.*)

ALL. Hail, Adrea! Hail, Queen!

BEVILACCAS. There is a Queen over Adrea! Way — way — way —

(*He runs off, calling, until his voice is lost in the distance.*)

(*A great cry of "Adrea!" — "Salve!" goes up from the people.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*Standing — as all rise*). Adrea, in the presence of the Consuls, the Senate, the Elders and the Magistrates — by their sovereign leave, ascend the throne.

(*Adrea starts towards the throne, but seeing Kaeso, starts back with a cry; then collects herself and ascends the throne. Nagar, in final benediction, majestically passes off. Sylvestros and the other ambassadors salute the Queen and go.*)

Photo. Byron, N. Y.

Scene from ADREA

THE AUGUR. "No god can alter what is written in the Book of Fate. O Queen, look not upon the sun. He took thy sight at birth and would take it back. (*Raising his rod.*) Jupiter, protect her!"

THE AUGUR (*Reading her soul*). No god can alter what is written in the Book of Fate. O Queen, look not upon the sun. He took thy sight at birth and would take it back. (*Raising his rod.*) Jupiter, protect her!

(*He passes off.*)

(*Adrea is now seated on the throne. Marcus Lecca and Caius Valgus sit on either side of her.*)

HERALD OF THE SENATE. All who claim the Queen's grace, approach in the Queen's name.

ARKISSUS (*Coming forward, kneels*). I make fealty, O Queen, and would fight for thee, I, Arkissus of Arcady.

ADREA (*Her voice trembling as she peers at him*). Art thou Arkissus I knew in Arcady? Sweet and bitter memories come with thee, Arkissus. . . . But I will keep thee here alway, alway while I live.

ARKISSUS. Now by this blood (*he cuts his arm with his knife*) of an hundred chiefs, I fight for thee, e'en as an archer.

MARCUS LECCA (*Deeply moved*). Thy sword . . . thy shield . . . Take them.

ARKISSUS. Usk be thanked! In life, for death — thy sentinel, thy wolf, O Queen of Adrea!

(*He salutes the Queen and goes.*)

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*To a group of prisoners in waiting*). Approach. The Queen will judge.

ADREA. Amnesty to all without.

HERALD OF THE SENATE. Amnesty in the Queen's name.

(*He passes off, proclaiming amnesty.*)

ADREA. Freedom to those without, I said. . . . But is there no man here before me, would ask mercy? (*All look at Kaeso who is impassive.*) Kaeso?

KAESO (*Defiantly*). At the Queen's command.

ADREA (*As though to say "At last!"*). Ha — a — a!

MARCUS LECCA. He hath begged leave to depart with his men and galleys.

ADREA. Naught else?

KAESO. Naught else.

ADREA. He is our sworn foe. I would judge him.

MARCUS LECCA. To-morrow, O Queen.

ADREA. This hour.

MARCUS LECCA. But thou art weary.

ADREA. Not weary now — Oh, nay. He is one who hath wronged my country . . . Adrea. I will question him alone . . . (*As Marcus Lecca hesitates.*) It is my will.

MARCUS LECCA (*Rising — bowing*). We await the Queen's call. . . .

(*At a gesture from Marcus Lecca, the Magistrates and Elders rise and, making obeisance, pass into the Senate Hall.*)

(*Garda and the maids retire through a little door behind the throne.*)

(*The soldiers at back retire.*)

(*Zastus and Galba draw the curtains at back.*)

ADREA. Come closer . . . closer . . . Let me see thy face. Closer . . . closer . . . (*Unwillingly Kaeso steps forward.*) Yea, it is Kaeso, Kaeso of Noricum. . . . At last I see thy face. . . . (*He starts to kneel.*) Stand. I would have thee stand. . . . Hast thou naught to ask of me?

KAESO. Naught.

ADREA. Was everything a lie . . . each word . . . and touch . . . and kiss . . . and promise? Hast thou ever loved me, Kaeso?

KAESO. I loved thee once.

ADREA. When?

KAESO. When first and last I let myself love woman . . . That day we two went into Arcady. . . . Last night the spell of it came back. I could have yielded to it once again if —

ADREA. If —

KAESO. If I would.

ADREA. If thou wouldst. Ay, if thou wouldst.

KAESO. Let me go forth.

ADREA. That is thy one thought then — to turn thy back upon this land and me — to go? Thou ow'st me nothing then, nothing? . . . Is yesterday so soon forgot?

KAESO. I have no memory of yesterday, save what the Queen

may grant. . . . For what am I to-day? (*Bitterly.*) As for her, her heart's desire is hers.

ADREA. Her heart's desire? And have I then my heart's desire . . . I? (*Holding back the tears.*) Gods! Gods! I cannot think that thou dost live and breathe, and that blood runneth in thy veins. . . . So thou dost say I have my heart's desire? An hour ago my heart's desire was death. And then I heard thy marriage song. The gods heard, too, and flung from heaven a flash of light in which I could see all thy vileness. Thou didst know this awful thing — and knowing, let it be. . . . And because of this shame, I am come back from the dead to judge thee; because of this, I am alive, before thee now; and, though I died to-day and still I feel the grave wreath bind my head, my shadow sits before thee with a sceptre in its hand and thou must answer to me — for thou didst know.

KAESO. For what is done, O Queen, what answer is there?

ADREA. Thou didst know.

KAESO. Before the gods, I did not dream such evil lay in wait for thee.

ADREA. But after — after —

KAESO. So be it — I —

ADREA. Answer yea or nay — answer. Thou didst know.

KAESO. I knew.

ADREA. Ah! (*She could lay hands upon him; but sinks back. As she rubs her numbed fingers.*) I know not if I freeze or burn. . . .

KAESO. Say what reparation I shall make.

ADREA. Thou wouldst make reparation?

KAESO. Ay.

ADREA. Then give me back yesterday.

KAESO. Nay, no man can that.

ADREA. Canst thou give me back that one hour when we stood together in the garden . . . that hour before all that was sweet in my soul . . . all that was a woman — all — all was lost?

KAESO. Nay, I —

ADREA. Gods, to speak of reparation! Give me back myself — myself that was; give me back my happy blindness; give me that — for I have seen too much. Give me back the woman in my father's tents, favored and loved; give me back my soul and body — pure and clean. Purge me of last night. Set me where I was e'en yesterday ere thou didst call me back with lies that all the power of all the gods shall not make truth. . . . Do e'en this, great Kaeso, and go free.

KAESO. The past is fixed beyond recall, and yesterday is past. I cannot unmake time. What is, is.

ADREA. Yea. Naught — naught in all this world can alter that — what is, *is*.

KAESO. Let me go forth.

ADREA. Stay . . . Stay. . . .

KAESO. I *will* go forth.

ADREA (*Rising — imperiously*). Stay. Why — why doth not some god reach down and thrust a firebrand through thy heart and draw it out and thrust it back and curse thee with the endless, burning pain I suffer here . . . (*her hand on her heart*) pain to make thee call for death and throw thyself upon a sword. Nay, nay, Kaeso, not that . . . not that . . . I am mad . . . for as I say it — I remember Arcady and all the woman in me still cries out for thee . . . Kaeso, some sign of penitence, Kaeso, some shadow of remorse. O Kaeso! A reason, a reason. Speak!

KAESO. Alas! All night a sullen battle raged within my heart. Ah, if only —

ADREA. Yea, there is a reason hidden in the dark . . . O Kaeso, tell me why thou didst let it be. Tell me why? Say — say thou didst not know my shame until it was too late; and then — then 'twas shame of my shame held thee back . . . the thought that nothing e'er could make me clean again. . . . Ah, Gods, not that! Oh! I will think, if thou dost bid me, that wine and revelling throughout the night had dazed thee; that e'en upon the galley's deck thou still wert mad or forced on pain of death to spoil me. . . . Say 'tis so . . . say 'tis so to take mine agony away — to give me peace.

Find me a reason — a reason . . . find me some lie to drug my senses; give me one word to hang a hope upon — a jot of hope; find me a reason why I live; a reason to keep faith in the high gods. Find me a reason — let it be a lie — but find me a reason and I will believe thee, Kaeso.

KAESO. I have no answer — none. And if remorse be here within my heart, why, I must clench my teeth upon that word and wait in silence.

ADREA (*Grasping at the word*). Remorse . . .

KAESO (*Bitterly*). Canst thou not see? Is there no agony for me? Am I not punished?

ADREA (*Almost happy*). *Art* thou punished, Kaeso? Art thou punished?

KAESO. Ay, I have lost the one desire of my soul.

ADREA (*Glad*). Ah! Ah! Almost I forgive thee, then. . . . The gods have put the spell of Arcady upon him. Now at last he suffers — losing me.

KAESO. I am punished.

ADREA. I forgive thee.

KAESO. More and more I waken to it every moment.

ADREA. I forgive thee then.

KAESO. I stand here looking at the place where yesterday I thought to enter with my legions and moor an hundred galleys almost where thou dost stand . . . almost 'twas done. A great and splendid nation sprang to life but yesterday . . . (*Adrea, comprehending, watches him, listens, motionless*) — and that most fair harbor . . . mine. Its waves invited me and drugged my soul, like Cyprian wine, with dreams of victories. I had no scruples . . . thou wert the price. I plucked my heart out and set it under foot — to be Imperator of Adrea — to rule the world. . . . And here am I to-day captive to a woman. . . . Is not my shame enough?

ADREA (*Quietly, her eyes looking on something far away, lost in thought. Nods*). Yea, yea, it *is* enough. Thou hast said it — thou shalt go forth.

KAESO. I am set free?

ADREA. Yea, I set thee free.

KAESO. What ho! Zastus! Lictors! I go — I go. (*He rushes to Adrea almost as though he loved her once more.*) By Usk! But I could love thee now, Adrea, I could love thee now.

(*He rushes up the steps of the throne to embrace her.*)

ADREA (*Gently*). Ah! Ah! Ah! Kaeso, Kaeso, wait, wait, wait, Kaeso, wait. (*Kaeso descends the steps and waits. Adrea calls.*) Enter. (*The curtains at back are drawn aside by slaves, and Zastus and Galba enter, followed by Marcus Lecca and the Senate. The Slave of the Whips takes his place as before. Adrea speaks in a calm voice.*) Kaeso, the tribune, goes forth to his camp.

MARCUS LECCA (*Astounded*). You bid him go? He who gives no submission?

ADREA (*Softly*). Yea. And if but his garment's hem be soiled upon the way, he who hath done it shall answer me in chains. Draw up the very flower of my legions . . . an hundred banners . . . let slaves walk chanting. . . . Lay before him carpetings of purple.

MARCUS LECCA. What?

(*Looks at her in wonderment.*)

ADREA. Let his path be strewn with wreaths; flutes and cymbals play before him; give him the robe of a King of Kings and set him on a horse of state. . . . Lead him through the streets and let the heralds run before and call: "Kaeso goes forth, Kaeso the conqueror" — that all the multitude may follow him and cry "Long live great Kaeso, Imperator!" And when he doth leave my city gates and all his men and galleys are in sight — there — there before them all, make him *captive* (*Marcus Lecca, the Consuls, Magistrates and Elders start with amazement*) — and whip him! (*To the Slave of the Whips.*) Lash him! Scourge him! . . . (*Soldiers surround Kaeso and drag him off. The Slave of the Whips follows, making ready his whip.*) Dog from Pluto — dog from Pluto!

CURTAIN

ACT IV

A room in the Palace.

At the end of the Coronation festivals. Three days later. The Judgment of Kaeso.

"*Fate keeps for both one fatal day.*"

Horace.

SCENE: *A room, bearing the stamp of femininity, yet simply furnished, — a table, chair and couch.*

At back, there is a casement window through which one sees an old marble court. A tinted and sculptured altar to Juno is erected in a corner.

The floor is marble, with a skin laid here and there. A large arch leads to the women's quarters. Double doors lead to the vast Audience Hall of the palace, through which all (save the Queen's women) must enter.

The sunlight comes in from an opening in the jewelled dome; but there is a canopy across the dome which prevents the sun from shining down into the room.

A faint, royal salute of a trumpet is heard as the curtain goes up.

The Queen is seated at an open window, gazing toward the camp of Kaeso. She has watched through the night. Two slave women, Myris and Lefta, are near her, holding long-handled fans with which they shield the Queen's eyes from the sunlight. A slave girl is fanning the air. Garda stands near Adrea.

As the curtain rises, the voice of a slave outside proclaims the hour.

VOICE (*Off, proclaiming*). The Slave of the Dial cries 'tis long past the dawn hour.

(*There is the stamping of a sandal — twice — outside, and the Slave of the Queen's door, a saffron colored Syrian, enters, carrying a staff.*)

SLAVE OF THE DOOR. Arkissus, the Queen's newly-made tribune.

(*Kneels.*)

(*Arkissus enters. A decided change has taken place in him. He*

is the grim warrior, the man of responsibility — a touch of the savage remains only when he is excited. He wears the full armor of a tribune, Major of Adrea.)

ARKISSUS. Greetings. Hath not the Queen slept all the night?

GARDA (*Apart to Arkissus*). 'Tis a strange reign of three days, wherein the Queen sits alway at the casement.

ARKISSUS. Ay, gazing toward the empty camp of Kaeso, now a captive, (*gloating*) beaten, lashed, and mocked. . . . Three days in bondage, awaiting the Queen's sentence of death.

SLAVE OF THE DOOR (*Who has gone off, stamps and enters again*). Marcus Lecca would have speech of the Queen.

ARKISSUS (*To Garda*). Only we know — we two in all Adrea — why she cannot sleep. By Usk! She will find rest when his death scroll lies before her to-day. . . . (*As Nagar and the vestals pass by the palace, chanting "Peace in Adrea."*) Then peace indeed.

(*The Slave of the Door brings in Marcus Lecca, who wears his official dress.*)

GARDA (*Softly*). Mistress, Marcus Lecca.

(*Adrea, lost in thought, does not hear.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Greetings. (*Arkissus coldly acknowledges Marcus Lecca's greetings.*) Well met, Arkissus. (*They shake hands by grasping each other's forearm on the inside.*) For three days thou hast bade thy legions revile this Kaeso. What hath he done to merit such infamy?

ARKISSUS. The Queen hath ordered his death to-day without trial.

(*Caius Valgus appears in the doorway.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Nay, it shall not be. The Senate is rent in factions. The Queen must heed us. We will not prepare the death scroll.

CAIUS VALGUS (*Joining Marcus Lecca*). What hath he done? A reason?

ARKISSUS. I stand against this man, as doth the Queen. Enough.

MARCUS LECCA. I will have speech of the Queen.

(*Adrea rises. She has not heard their voices.*)

GARDA (*Warningly*). The Queen . . .

(*Arkissus leaves the room.*)

(*The slaves kneel.*)

ADREA. Fan in the air, Garda. Fan in the air. (*Garda signals to the slaves to wave their fans.*) I cannot breathe here — I cannot breathe here. (*She sits on the couch and, with a gesture, summons the dancers who have been in waiting. Four pyrrhic dancers run on, clashing their shields, dancing with savage abandon. Watching them abstractedly — with an impatient gesture.*) Attend.

(*The dancers pause as she speaks. Garda motions them to go.*)

ARKISSUS (*Re-entering*). I beg to tell the Queen that Bevilaccas, he whom she would see, hath not yet returned from the death watch of Kaeso.

(*He passes out.*)

ADREA. And I must wait — wait here for news of this man; what he says; how he looks, feels, thinks. . . . Now, with death so near, I must wait. (*Rises.*) Bid them play. Fan in the air . . . I tell thee, Marcus Lecca, I cannot breathe here. Talk to me, lest I sleep. I dread to sleep, for once I slept, and, waking, I remembered quickly who I was . . . and what I am. . . . Talk to me, talk to me lest I sleep. . . .

MARCUS LECCA. Why should a Queen so favored of the gods —

ADREA. Ha!

MARCUS LECCA. — begin her reign by taking the life of this Kaeso?

ADREA. I tell thee, Marcus Lecca — Nay, nay, do not question me.

MARCUS LECCA. Ay, and such punishment! A horror of thee rises in the Senate. Thou . . . once so gentle, so —

ADREA. Gentle? I gentle? (*Looking in the mirror which she has found on the table.*) Is it thou then that three days since wast patient, gentle, kind? I — once so gentle — am now the sport of fate . . . a woman who runs madly with the winds . . . a cry among the trees . . . a glimmer in the mist that soon goes out. The gentle are the reeds in vacant fields — the rushes in mad tides; they only rustle prayers against

the fate that beats and beats them down. Gentle — ha! But to-day is mine and by my father's sword — punishment! (*She sinks into a chair and presently closes her eyes.*)

GARDA (*In a low voice*). She sleeps.

MARCUS LECCA. I cannot understand . . .

CAIUS VALGUS. Strange . . .

(*They steal out of the room.*)

ADREA (*After a pause — waking with a start*). Garda? Garda? (*Garda comes to her quickly.*) See'st thou there that painted, hideous, gibbering thing that —

GARDA. Nay, mistress, nay.

ADREA. Nay? Thou art near me, Garda — thou art near me. To-day I triumph, Garda, I triumph to-day.

SLAVE OF THE DOOR (*Enters, announcing*). Thryssos, master of the wild horses of Thrakia, to the Queen.

ADREA. Bid him enter — 'twill humor me. (*Thryssos enters, a dark, savage creature, with ragged, long, blue-black hair, very sunburnt. He is almost naked, save for a bit of faded old green cloth washed out by the sun and rain in the open air. He carries a long whip. He falls before Adrea, fawning.*) Art thou Thryssos?

THRYSSOS. I am Thryssos. I bring a gift of three wild horses from my master, the King of Thrakia.

ADREA (*Echoing*). The King of Thrakia.

THRYSSOS. Draka leads them to the casement, that the great Queen may honor them with a glance. (*The horses by this time are outside the casement.*) Their names, Aspasia, Lais, and most beautiful — my Phrynne. Will the illustrious Queen deign to look upon them?

ADREA. Sh! Sh! I hear footsteps . . . Bevilaccas . . .

GARDA. Nay.

ADREA. Why comes he not? Oh, for news of this Kaeso.

THRYSSOS. Will the illustrious Queen deign to look upon —

ADREA. Yea, yea.

(*She goes to the casement; Myris holds a fan to shade her eyes.*)

THRYSSOS (*Still on his knees*). Black — that is Phrynne — with pasterns of white. (*We hear a horse pawing the pavement*

impatiently.) 'Tis Phrynne chafing at being held. She is famed for giving "Grace of the Desert."

ADREA (*Leaving the window*). "Grace of the Desert?" Is that a game?

THRYSSOS. We lay a man — a captive, on the earth in chains — one horse bound to his head — my Phrynne — two others at his feet are bound. My whip sings — Hrrc! The horses leap apart. The captive cries out but once — no more . . . there is not time. The gods themselves could not put together what is left, and call it man.

ADREA. Hence, hence. You feast on horrors. Hence . . . Air, air. (*She pulls at the cord to the canopy which hangs down near her couch, calling "Air!" All call "The sun! The sun!" Garda rushes towards her, but cannot stop her. The sun, a long, sharp finger of gold, enters from above and strikes her as she looks up almost blinded; she reels away from it.*) The light . . . the light. . . . (*The maids have set up a clamor of "Aie!" and all is consternation. Myris raises the canopy, shutting out the sun. During this, Garda has motioned Thryssos away.*) Dost think the day ill-starred, Arkissus?

ARKISSUS. Not so. The will of Adrea stands supreme. (*A bell is heard in the distance — one deep, long, brazen, ominous note.*) Hear? The Senate and Consuls bear the scroll of Kaeso's death. The Scribe will sign it here, and if the Queen affix her seal, Kaeso shall die within the hour.

SLAVE OF THE DOOR (*Entering in haste*). Bevilaccas to the Queen.

ADREA. Ah! (*At this same moment, Bevilaccas' voice is heard in the halls, crying: "Way, way, way."*) Let him approach. Haste . . . Let him approach. (*Bevilaccas runs into the room breathlessly.*) What news? Speak.

(*Bevilaccas' cry ceases on the threshold and he pauses, awed at seeing Adrea. Arkissus motions him to come forward. He kneels timidly, letting out a quick breath. He wears the same costume. The dust lies on his sandals and clothing.*)

BEVILACCAS. On my forehead is written the honor.

(*Striking his forehead with the palm of his hand.*)

ADREA. Speak quickly.

BEVILACCAS. In the empty tents of Kaeso, O Daughter of the Sun, what black despair!

ADREA. Ah!

BEVILACCAS. What a night watch! There sits this conqueror in mock state . . . the carpetings of purple, laid three days since by the Queen's will, spread yet at his feet, the faded flowers, now three days dead, mouldering in his path. His food-bearer, some vile parasite, his visor down . . . I did not once *see* his face — sat near and watched.

ADREA (*Draws herself up with a breath. To Arkissus*). Send for this food-bearer. (*Arkissus starts, but pauses. To Bevilaccas.*) On, on.

BEVILACCAS. As night fell thick, he rose and took fresh salt and bade his food-man rub it in the wounds upon his back where he was scourged of thee, crying: "I — I, the tribune Kaeso, captive to a woman!"

ADREA. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

BEVILACCAS. And then he wept.

ADREA. Ha, ha, he wept. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! (*To Arkissus.*) Send for the food-bearer. (*To Bevilaccas.*) On, on.

BEVILACCAS. All night without a word, he lay apart nor slept; but fiercely searched the stars as though, by tracing their wild course, he could divine his fate worked out upon the heaven's black.

ADREA. I knew . . . I knew his maddened gaze swept the night skies — looked upon the restless clouds, for I saw . . . I have been visited by visions of the night, and in them I have seen his face.

ARKISSUS. A face so black —

ADREA. Yea, I know. There is a bond of hatred between us so strong that we feel each the other's heart e'en as we hate. He knew that I slept not last night, but, like him, watched . . . hating. (*Arkissus starts forward.*) Hence, bring the scroll of Kaeso's death — I will set my seal. It is the end. (*Arkissus hastens out. To Bevilaccas.*) On.

GARDA (*Remonstrating*). Mistress.

ADREA (*Waving her away*). Silence. (*To Bevilaccas.*) I would know all.

BEVILACCAS. O Queen, at dawn it was I saw the horror of it. . . . There, like a dull beast he sat, a trapped beast, that, panting, moved not his fixed gaze . . . his breath came hoarse as some spent wolf's . . . he did not stir — nor eat — he shunned the water at his lips. He, the flower of conquerors, sat staring at the sea where yesterday his galleys sank. I passed my hand before his eyes thus: once, twice — (*he moves his hand*) he saw naught. Then, in a fit of madness, he called the curses of the gods on his own head and raved of — of Arcady, — some place I know not, Arcady. He rent his garments till I ran from the sight. Once I turned back to look — and they had wrested his shield from him lest he should dash himself upon its point . . . this King of yesterday!

(*A death march is heard in the distance. Then a mock fanfare of trumpets. Garda leaves the room. Adrea goes up to the window and looks out. The maids, Myris and Lefta, shield her eyes. The Slave of the Door has stamped his foot. He throws open the door, and Zastus appears on the threshold, saluting. Faint cries of derision are heard in the distance.*)

ZASTUS. They bring Kaeso from his camp to the judgment hall.

(*Adrea stands immovable; the memory of Arcady has for a moment struck a responsive chord in her heart.*)

(*Bevilaccas goes out. Galba appears, carrying a black banner — set on an ostentatious standard. The ends of the banner are rent and dirty.*)

GALBA. The standard of Kaeso of Noricum, trailed through the dust to thy feet, O Queen!

(*He places the standard at her feet.*)

(*There is another mock fanfare, a little nearer; the clashing of swords against shields continues, coming nearer. As the trumpets die away, derisive cries of the people go up in the distance: "Dictator!" "Salve Imperator!" "Hail, Kaeso!" Then laughter is heard.*)

ARKISSUS (*Enters*). The venerable the Herald of the Senate —

ADREA. Bid him enter.

ARKISSUS. — bringing the death scroll of Kaeso, that the Scribe may sign it here before the Queen.

(*Lefta brings Adrea a robe which she assists her to put on. When all is ready and Adrea turns to Arkissus, he beckons on the Herald of the Senate, who enters in state costume, bearing a scroll, followed by a Scribe, who carries a reed pen or stylus, sand, and a horn of writing fluid attached to his girdle. Two witnesses, dressed in purple, also enter, followed by the Page of the Senate, carrying the royal seal on a plate of gold. All are bowing obsequiously. The Herald of the Senate places the scroll upon the table.*)

ARKISSUS. By the Queen's will, the Scribe will write her name.

HERALD OF THE SENATE. Attend. (*The Scribe kneels in front of the table, ready to sign.*) Witnesses.

(*They stand back of the table.*)

ARKISSUS. Write the name of Adrea.

(*The Scribe writes the name. The witnesses bend forward to look. The Herald of the Senate then sets out the scroll for the Queen.*)

HERALD OF THE SENATE. The seal.

(*The Page of the Senate steps forward and kneels, offering the Queen the royal seal. Adrea comes forward and lifts the seal. The "Death March of Kaeso" is still being played. Adrea starts to stamp the seal — hesitates.*)

ARKISSUS. Will the Queen set her seal? The Senate and the Consuls await her will. (*The Senate gong sounds again.*) The moment passes.

ADREA. The moment is presumptuous.

ARKISSUS (*Comes to her — kneeling*). The Queen's good grace! I but spoke of the passing time.

ADREA. I am the time. I am the moment.

ARKISSUS (*Kneels lower*). Grace.

ADREA. I am Adrea. It is yet early. I say it is yet early.

ARKISSUS (*Abjectly*). 'Tis yet early.

HERALD OF THE SENATE (*Bowing, kneels*). 'Tis yet early.

ADREA (*Turning on the Herald of the Senate*). Wait ye there. (*She points to the hall.*)

(*The Scribe, Page of the Senate and Witnesses bow and leave the room.*)

SLAVE OF THE DOOR (*Appearing*). The most reverend the Senate.

ADREA. Let the Senate wait. (*One of the Senators is heard to laugh in the hall.*) And bid them laugh silently — they fret me. (*The Herald of the Senate motions all to be silent as he passes off.*)

ARKISSUS. Adrea, to hesitate —

ADREA. The aspect of things doth change, Arkissus, as we see them far or near. I have said this man shall die — (*Arkissus starts forward; Adrea stops him, holding up her hand.*) Yea, yea, Arkissus, yea . . . But there comes upon me suddenly an infinite pity for the littleness of life — how hard to come by, and how lightly lost. How brief, when all is done . . . a sword thrust, and this living thing is dust . . . too brief . . . too brief . . . A moment since, I heard a word that took me back, back . . . Arcady.

ARKISSUS. What, is it all forgot — this punishment we sought? Nay, then, I go — go back to Frisia. (*He starts to go — pauses.*) But nay, Adrea, look. (*He points to the banner.*) I have seen that standard, that once I followed, trail in the dust; I have seen mine own galleys sink; faces go down that I have loved, slept beside, eaten and starved with; I have fought them all to hell that thou shouldst punish this man. Vengeance, Adrea, I cry for it, I who loved thee there in Arcady.

(*He kneels.*)

ADREA (*Goes to him and lays her hand on his shoulder*). Arkissus, Arkissus, my soul hath gone from out my body. I felt it go out in the night when first I knew that Kaeso was to die. There is no vengeance in my heart, Arkissus . . . nay, no vengeance there.

(*Garda enters.*)

(*The Slave of the Door stamps twice and enters, followed by Zastus.*)

ZASTUS. By the Queen's will, I bring the man who served this Kaeso food.

ARKISSUS. Bid him approach. (*Zastus signals. Galba brings*

in an abject creature who wears old armor — the visor down — the arm crooked and the hand concealing the face. Sternly.) Bring him nearer that the Queen may speak with him. (*Zastus tries to do so and fails. Savagely.*) Take down his arm. (*Zastus drags the man's arm down to his side. Commanding.*) Show his visage to the Queen. (*Stepping back — aghast.*) Mimus, the fool!

(*Adrea looks at him. It is an horrible awakening from Arcady and her memories. She stares at Mimus in dazed horror. A long, long pause.*)

ADREA (*With a terrible rush of memory*). Ah! (*Whispering.*) Take him away, take him out of my sight, out of my sight, out of my sight. . . . (*Galba, Zastus and the other soldier take Mimus off quickly, and she never sees him again. A pause. Adrea is still looking at the place on which Mimus stood.*) Gods! Kaeso could look in the face of this fool — touch him . . . remembering. Ah! Out of my heart, pity! Shame, thou slighted thing to hesitate. . . . Ye great Gods of high Olympus, (*uplifts her hands with beseeching eyes — supplication in her voice*) come ye in mighty company and help me! Jove, tell me by what vile, tormented, damned death can I send this man grovelling into the shades that he may remember me at the end? What? What? (*The faint sound of horses' feet is heard at a little distance from the window. Adrea is struck, remembering her gift of wild horses. Then to Arkissus.*) My Consuls in the halls — call them. (*Arkissus opens the doors and beckons. Nagar enters first in his state vestments, followed by Marcus Lecca, the Magistrates and Consuls. Adrea speaks quietly to them.*) This Kaeso shall die by the wild horses!

(*The Consuls stand transfixed, not fully comprehending her purpose, but presently realize the meaning of her words.*)

ADREA. Arkissus, set the casement open. Open, I say. (*Calling.*) Thryssos!

ARKISSUS (*Echoing*). Thryssos! Here — enter.

ADREA. Then 'tis done.

MARCUS LECCA. The Senate waits.

ADREA. 'Tis done. He shall die by the horses and now.

CAIUS VALGUS. It must not be.

ADREA. I want this man before me here, before me in this room — standing there on that spot — that he may learn from mine own lips the manner of his death.

NAGAR (*Horror-stricken*). Oh!

OMNES. Nay.

MARCUS LECCAS. We are Romans, not barbarians.

NAGAR. What madness —

MARCUS LECCA. To a soldier, a soldier's death.

OMNES. Yea, yea.

ADREA. It shall be in the circus.

CAIUS VALGUS. Nay, this the Queen may not do.

ADREA. And I shall wear my mightiest robes and Adrea's crown and laugh and laugh.

NAGAR (*Approaching her impressively, his hand uplifted*). 'Tis monstrous!

THE CONSULS. Monstrous!

ADREA. And by Medusa's heart of stone —

MARCUS LECCA. Take heed, O Queen!

CONSULS. Take heed!

ADREA. When he doth cry for mercy —

NAGAR. Daughter —

ADREA (*Laughing*). Our thumbs shall be turned down.

MARCUS LECCA. Death for Kaeso, yea; but the cause for sending him to the shades so — so basely?

ALL. The cause, the cause?

ADREA. Galba? (*Galba advances.*) Bring this Kaeso here before me. He shall die within the hour. Tell the keeper of the horses to prepare.

MARCUS LECCA. Thou art lost to justice.

CAIUS VALGUS (*Addressing the Consuls near him*). She is lost to justice.

ALL. Yea, yea, yea. (*A group of Consuls fill the centre of the room as they speak.*) She is lost to justice — lost to justice. (*The Consuls speak to Marcus Lecca, to Caius Valgus, then turn to Nagar, and, as more join them, they fill the stage — their*

backs to the audience, facing Adrea and crying out: "Thou art lost to justice — lost to justice." Chaos reigns.)

ADREA (*Hidden by the crowd*). Lost to justice? O Gods, hear them — lost to justice!

ALL. Yea, lost to justice.

ARKISSUS. I stand against ye with the legions of Adrea. The Queen's will must be obeyed. Kaeso shall die by the horses.

MARCUS LECCA. To the Forum. To the Forum.

ALL. To the Forum.

MARCUS LECCA. We will pronounce against the Queen. The Senate and the people are supreme —

ALL. To the Forum.

(*As all start to go, Adrea faces them.*)

ADREA. Hold.

(*The Consuls pause, motionless, silent.*)

ZASTUS (*Entering*). Kaeso to the Queen.

(*Kaeso enters. He is brought on by Galba and Zastus. There is a pause. Adrea looks straight ahead — not at Kaeso. Kaeso, stripped of his armor, is vastly changed in this interval of three days. He has aged and shows the conflicts through which he has passed. His face is ashen pale. He is dazed as though almost unable to realize the swiftness of his fall. He knows that he is doomed.*)

ADREA (*After a long pause, quietly*). Since the Queen no more commands, then hear (*covering her face with her drapery*) the woman tell to men this thing which women only whisper to the gods.

(*The men slowly turn to Adrea, as though awed by her change of manner — as she stands with bowed head in deepest humility.*)

NAGAR. What meaning is here?

ARKISSUS. Adrea — I am by thy side.

(*She clings to him.*)

(*Adrea begins her story in a low, solemn voice. The listeners stand watching with anticipation of evil. As she continues they are so impressed by her voice, manner and terrible earnestness, that they gradually bend forward, listening to her recital with their very eyes.*)

ADREA. Arkissus, Arkissus, mine hour has come. . . . I loved this Kaeso there in Arcady. He went . . . forgot. It was three years. . . Then here we met again. He kissed my mouth . . . I went to marriage with him . . . to his arms . . . O Gods! All was a lie . . . It was not Kaeso . . . He gave me to the fool of Iulia Doma's Court. Thou hast seen this fool — O think ye! Kaeso, my love, my hope, Kaeso who was the world — he gave me to this painted, hideous, gibbering thing — this fool in red and white — this dog from Pluto, this effigy of devils — this beast in raiment . . . who took me . . . I was blind and Kaeso knew and let it be and laughed . . . I heard his laughter. No other sound shall blot it from my soul until I die — nay, after — after in eternity — I still shall hear that one shrill laugh . . .

MARCUS LECCA. Accursed be he!

(*As Nagar and the Consuls wail, covering their faces with their togas, Adrea's body sways for a moment where she stands.*)

ADREA. Oh, there is no drachm of blood in me that doth not quiver, for I am denied and lost, lost. Woe is me!

MARCUS LECCA. Lost is our land!

ADREA. Yea, for by Menethus who begat me — hear mine oath. I shall not bear a child to sit this throne; for I should fear to see its face, lest it be red and white. I bring none after me. This lost, accursed thing he made, this wanton of a fool — is Queen of Adrea.

ALL. Justice! Vengeance! Judgment! The horses!

(*For a moment the scene is one of wild excitement.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*As he passes Kaeso, reviling him*). Dog! Barbarian! (*Calling off.*) Thryssos!

CAIUS VALGUS (*Striking Kaeso with his toga as he passes him*). I spit on thee!

(*Thryssos dashes in with an eager cry.*)

ADREA. Thryssos, my Thryssos, this Kaeso shall be thine to play with, to torture. Bind him to Phrynne. Let thy whip sing — crack! And as thy horses leap apart, call out my name, "Adrea, Adrea!" Go hence: teach Kaeso thy Grace

of the Desert. (*Thryssos hastens off. Savagely.*) Kaeso, thou art dead . . .

KAESO (*Slowly rising from his knees*). Remorse is in my soul.

ADREA. At last! At last he feels remorse.

KAESO. Adrea, say thou dost forgive me!

ADREA. Forgive thee? Thou who sold me to all the hells — forgive thee?

KAESO. Then do I die accursed.

ADREA. Accursed.

KAESO. For still I love thee. (*He turns to go with Zastus.*) Forgive — forgive me. (*With a rush he seizes Zastus' sword which is at his side and turns to Adrea quickly.*) Forgive me — forgive—

(*Is about to fall on the sword.*)

MARCUS LECCA (*Quickly*). Hold his hand.

(*Zastus and Galba seize Kaeso and wrest the sword from him.*)

CAIUS VALGUS. Cheat not the Queen.

KAESO (*On his knees*). Remorse! Remorse is in my soul.

MARCUS LECCA. She hath him in the dust.

ADREA. Yea, I have him in the dust — I have him in the dust at last, to tear apart, to rend, to drag and beat and crush upon the stones . . . I have him in the dust . . . And now . . . what now? O Gods! A pity seems to rise within me . . . He is the man who loved me, who laughed and sang with me in Arcady . . . and now — look on him now. . . . (*Relenting.*) I cannot. O Gods, I cannot! (*With a gesture.*) I set him free . . . I set him free . . . Begone — begone — I say, begone. He hath felt remorse. He hath felt remorse, 'tis enough.

MARCUS LECCA (*Astounded*). Doth the Queen relent?

(*A murmur of wonder and dissent is heard.*)

ADREA (*Swayed by conflicting emotions*). Nay, nay, but he hath felt remorse — let him go.

MARCUS LECCA. On, on, heed not the Queen. (*Calling.*) Thryssos, thy horses.

(*They all start forward to take Kaeso.*)

THRYSSOS (*Entering quickly. To Kaeso*). Up, up, the horses wait.

ADREA (*Starting forward to shield Kaeso*). He hath felt remorse.

MARCUS LECCA. Thou canst not save him now. On!

(*Zastus and Galba start to drag off Kaeso.*)

ADREA. Nay, nay. One word . . . before the end. (*They release Kaeso. Adrea draws him to her.*) Kaeso, I cannot give thee life, nor bring back hope, nor make us what we were; but I, in memory of Arcady, defend thee from this awful death . . . and thus and thus and thus I save thee. Gods, O Gods!

(*She has seized a sword from the table and stabbed him. He falls.*)

MARCUS LECCA. Living or dead, the horses!

(*All start toward the body.*)

ADREA (*Facing them*). Hold. He is mine own — mine own in death — for death hath wiped out all.

MARCUS LECCA AND OTHERS (*Starting forward again*). The horses!

ADREA. Back. He is mine own — mine own in death. This sin be on my head. And now in death at last he is mine own, mine own, mine own. . . .

(*She falls to her knees, sobbing over the dead body of Kaeso.*)

(*Marcus Lecca and the others retreat towards the door, leaving her with her grief.*)

CURTAIN

THE EPILOGUE IN ARCADY

Fourteen years later.

A trumpet sounds a salute softly. It conveys the effect of peace. As it ends, a shepherd's lay, a merry tune, is piped at a little distance, as though in the fields beyond; and after two or three bars, the curtain rises.

We see a hall in Adrea's palace in Arcady: The Bronze Throne Hall. There is a door to the forest and a door leading to Adrea's apartments. A casement window at back is shut off by a skin which is stretched across. When this window is open, the sun pours in. There is a throne at back with a high throne-chair. There are many standards set about and great bronze chests. The daylight

comes into the room from a dome — but as though shaded. The room is set in soft shadow.

Garda enters. She carries a primitive pail, holding water, and a bundle of pale green reeds and star grass with a few iris blossoms. She looks happier, but she is now bent. Her hair is still black, but her face is older.

GARDA (*Calling toward Adrea's apartments*). Mistress . . . Mistress, it is the same shepherd who played before thy father's tents long ago, here in Arcady. . . . And since thine eyes may no longer look upon the light of day, I bring water from the brook we called enchanted. And lo! (*Holding up the grass and leaves.*) The star grass and the leaves are from the very paths we trod when we followed thy father's wars, so many years ago. (*Myris, Lelit and Lefta run on dancing and smiling and humming the tune played by the unseen shepherd. They carry leaves and flowers which they set about. Then turning, look toward the back.*) Listen . . . (*Shepherd's tune is nearer, gayer. The maids are still gayly dancing to the music.*) He pipes through reeds . . . Is it not soft and sweet? . . . (*Then going nearer to the door of Adrea's room.*) She heeds not, yet doth not sleep . . . her eyes are closed; her face is happy . . . She dreams. (*A faint sound of trumpets is heard.*) Trumpets in this far forest? . . . Strange . . .

MYRIS. Perhaps some journeying princes pass.

(*She starts to go to the window at back.*)

GARDA. Stay! (*Myris pauses.*) The casement . . . do not unbar the window — lest the Queen — (*Mysteriously, to the maids who cluster about her.*) Her eyes grow dimmer every day . . . and stronger and stronger the sun beats upon the casement window, as though longing to creep in. The sun that took her sight at birth would take it back: so spake the oracle. Yet must we cheat the sun and keep her in the shadows.

(*Myris, as the shepherd's music begins again, pushes Lelit forward and, joining hands, the maids laughingly circle about Garda and dance, singing to the tune:*

"O never was there melody
Like pipes, like pipes of Arcady,
For never was there melody
Like pipes, like pipes of Arcady."

Arkissus has entered silently. He still wears the dress of a tribune of Adrea's army. He stands near the door, looking at the happy picture, amused. His hair is whiter about the temples; but his face is unchanged.)

GARDA. Pst! Arkissus!

(*The maids, seeing him, pause, confused.*)

ARKISSUS. Nay, nay, dance. The spell of Arcady is on us all. In the witchery of this forest, the Queen learns to smile again. Nay, nay, dance. While the hearts are young, be happy. (*The unseen shepherd continues the quaint air but the maids retire. Arkissus is now at Adrea's door. He kneels.*) Sweet mistress, I would not speak of that far world almost forgot by us, nor bring the shadow of a care to Arcady; yet e'en now the Herald from that land of ours waits to know why the Queen doth linger in this forest — begging her return to Adrea.

(*Adrea appears in the doorway.*)

ADREA. Peace, peace, Arkissus, peace. But now I dreamed, yet was awake — (*she leans on the shoulder of Arkissus*) and in the dreaming I was not Queen, but only happy Adrea, as of old. (*Catches his hand, but not looking up — her eyes are dim.*) Again I touched Arkissus' hand as at our meeting, nor knew not in the dream of all the years that he should stand beside me whispering his great oath: "In life — for death." (*She notices the pail of water and, peering down, sees the flowers, and sits beside them on the floor.*) Ah, see the star grass and the irises! Again, I dreamed I met Lord Kaeso in my father's tents — here where now this palace stands; again mine eyes were blind — O happy eyes that could not see; again I dreamed I felt the forest turn to silver silence in the moon and put my lips to limpid water from the magic brook. . . . (*Drinks with childish pleasure, with her lips to the edge of the pail.*)

Come, come, drink, Arkissus, drink. (*Kneeling, he drinks as she drank.*) And in the dream, 'twas told me I should never more go back to Adrea, but linger happy here in Arcady — land of my childhood, land of memories, land where first I met and loved Kaeso . . . Arkissus, why comes not Zastus from Noricum with my prisoner? Hast thou yet no news of the child?

ARKISSUS. Mistress, why dost thou vex thy mind with thoughts of this child of Kaeso?

ADREA. I would see him. Ay, mine eyes do yearn to see him.

ARKISSUS (*Who has risen*). Nay, nay, this son of Kaeso is an enemy, born in anger in the enemy's far country, whence his mother Iulia Doma made war after war against thee. And though at last we have defeated her and she is dead, still is her child thine enemy, taught to hate thee. If he be found as thou has willed, and brought before thee — look not upon him.

ADREA. A child, Arkissus — nay, nay, a little child . . .

(*Again trumpets are heard.*)

ARKISSUS (*At the door*). Now by Usk! Zastus and Galba bring him.

ADREA (*Rising. A maid takes the pail away and all turn toward the door*). The child.

(*A child appears, Zastus on one side of him, Galba on the other. The child is dressed as a barbaric prince. He wears a little sword and carries a small shield.*)

ARKISSUS. Mistress, the child . . .

ZASTUS (*Announcing*). Vasha, son of Kaeso of Noricum and Princess Iulia, now a captive.

VASHA (*Proudly holding up his head and taking a step into the room*). A Prince am I, — Vasha. (*Adrea nods, half smiling.*) Next to thy throne I stand . . . If thou art the Queen, free me.

(*They free him.*)

(*Adrea advances and holds out her hands to him. Vasha, distrusting, steps back savagely. Adrea kneels to him. He looks at her, touches his knife, sees her outstretched hands — then warily looks about, lest he be trapped.*)

ADREA. See, I am kneeling at thy feet. (*Vasha stands impassive. Arkissus motions all to leave the room.*) Arkissus of Frisia, come, — the oath of fealty. Swear it to the child of Kaeso.

ARKISSUS. Nay, I cannot.

ADREA. The same oath thou didst swear to me so long ago. Swear it . . . "In life — for death."

ARKISSUS. In life — Nay, Adrea, I cannot.

ADREA. Yea, Arkissus, swear it. Kneel. (*He kneels.*) Vasha of Noricum, thy sword.

ARKISSUS. Vasha of Noricum — (*Then rising, impulsively.*) Nay, nay. Bid me serve none but thee. While the Queen hath sight, she must rule. Such is the law. 'Twould not be granted her to lay the sceptre down. Long live the Queen, say I.

ADREA. Arkissus . . .

(*Adrea gestures to Arkissus to leave them. He leaves the room as Adrea holds out her arms to the child.*)

VASHA. Nay . . . (*Half draws his sword — his shield upraised.*) The room is dark. Open the casement. (*Warily.*) 'Tis like a trap here. Let in the sunlight.

ADREA (*Looks up*). Let in the sunlight? (*Peers in the child's face.*) Sayst thou so? . . . (*With sudden inspiration.*) Oh, that I might let in the sunlight! Yet if I look on it, these frail eyes of mine will ne'er see this world again. . . . Yet I would let in the sunlight. . . . Hear first, O little Prince, hear first . . . There are two roads —

VASHA (*Still wary of her*). Two roads? Nay, meanest thou well? Is it a game we play — two roads?

ADREA (*Still kneeling*). Yea, it is a little playing first . . . The one path is a little boy's — running in the fields, following the brooks, free, singing, joyous . . . The other path, a little King's . . . There is no playing there, no brook, no fields, no singing, no freedom. For little Kings must never play; but always watch and war and learn to rule. And some have found much happiness in this, and some much woe. Which dost thou choose?

VASHA. I choose the pathway of a little King . . . I have been taught to hate thee, and that some day I shall be a King and make great wars and conquer all the world and even thee. Thy throne is mine.

ADREA. Yea . . . So speaks the child of Kaeso.

VASHA. I cannot play in darkness. If all be fair, let in the sunlight.

(*He points with his sword to the window.*)

ADREA. At the King's command, I will look upon it, gladly. Come, come, sweet Prince, a kiss for a crown and a throne. (*Calling.*) Garda? (*Enter Garda.*) The crown, the robe and the sceptre of Adrea. (*Garda leaves the room. To Vasha.*) 'Tis all in the play, sweet Prince. (*Adrea, looking back at the boy.*) To-day thou shalt go to my dear land — Nay, nay, 'tis in the playing. . . . Think of me often here in Arcady.

(*The shepherd's pipe is sounding and another shepherd's voice sings to the air in the distance — then presently a woman's voice tunes in as though in answer:*

"O never was there melody
Like pipes, like pipes of Arcady,
For never was there melody
Like pipes, like pipes of Arcady."

Interludes are heard through the song.)

VASHA. I go to Adrea, didst thou say?

ADREA. Yea . . . And think of me as one who dwells here in happiness. And if, when thou dost weary of thy ruling, thou wouldst play again, steal back — nay, nay, 'tis in the playing still — steal back and kiss me in the forest . . . so. (*She kisses him — he looks at her warily, half converted.*) And lead me with thy gentle hands along the ways of old. Perchance one day thou wilt not come alone, sweet Prince. . . . Oh, build thy throne on love, for only love endures.

(*Garda enters with the Herald of the Senate.*)

(*Garda carries the robe, the Herald of the Senate follows with the crown and sceptre on a gold cushion. Adrea takes the robe from*

Garda and wraps Vasha in it. He lays his little shield at the foot of the throne-steps.)

VASHA. But why dost thou wrap me in this robe?

ADREA. It is a little game we play. We play at being King. (*The Herald of the Senate and Garda leave the room after Adrea takes the crown and sceptre.*) Thou art the Prince and I the Queen, who being blinded — may not rule.

(*She offers the crown.*)

VASHA (*Rejecting it*). But I would not have a throne for which a Queen must give her eyes.

ADREA. 'Tis in the playing.

VASHA. Oh . . . then . . .

(*He allows her to put the crown on his head and Adrea leads him to the throne. As he sits, his little legs are not long enough to reach the platform and his feet dangle in childish fashion. The music ceases the moment the child is on the throne.*)

ADREA. Come, turn thy head. (*She turns his face from the window.*) So . . . Thou mayest not look until I speak the word that makes thee King and makes me . . . (*she falters*) . . . only happy Adrea again.

(*She puts the sceptre in his hand. He kisses her in childish fashion and puts his arms about her.*)

VASHA. I love this playing.

(*He is tempted to look.*)

ADREA. Dost thou? (*She lays her hands over his eyes.*) Put thy hands so . . . look not, but wait the word . . . I wish thee joy, dear little Prince. (*She retreats to the window, facing the child who sits the throne crowned and robed.*) Think of me in the Spring when all is green in Arcady . . . serene and peaceful, wishing thee well. . . . Do not forget me. (*Vasha turns.*) Nay, nay, 'tis in the playing; look not. Live long, love long, and see dear children at thy feet. May the gods keep thy heart young, thy faith pure, thy soul at peace, O child of Kaeso! (*As he tries to peep.*) Nay, nay, look not. (*Adrea, at the casement, takes her last look at Vasha, peering at him, smiling.*) So let me see thee last . . . so let me see thee last . . . at play. Nay, look not. (*She pulls down the*

covering of skin from the window.) O Sun that took my sight at birth, I give thee back . . . I give thee back thine own. (*She opens the window and stands — a golden figure, in the flood of dazzling sunlight. After a pause, during which she has been looking into the sunlight, she turns, blinded, and coming down, gropes her way to the throne.*) Long live the King!

(*She kneels at the feet of Vasha on the throne — the sun still pouring in.*)

(*A triumphal burst of trumpets is heard in the orchestra.*)

CURTAIN

THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

If Mr. Belasco idealized California in "The Girl of the Golden West", it was because California has never been very far from his heart, since the days he was a school-boy under Father Maguire. His early career had been bound up in stirring adventures among the uncouth, wild picturesqueness of the fly-by-night mining centres; his theatrical traditions had been ripened under the most glowing circumstances, in brilliant seasons at the San Francisco theatres; his first steps in play-writing, under the inspiration of Boucicault, in collaboration with James A. Herne, and under the pressure of immediate utility, had been begun there. He, therefore, knew his California, and had stored up material which could not be had from source books, no matter how extensively one searched. The incidents in the Polka Saloon, he had seen in real life; the melodramatic moment of the dripping blood had been described by his father as of actual occurrence; the types he brought together at the Girl's school were known to him in flesh and blood. "Jake" Wallace was a real character. The fact is, "The Girl of the Golden West" was writ in memory, long before pen was put to paper. When he brushed aside the conventional theatre orchestra and put in its place the concertina, banjo and bones — and between the acts strains of "Coal Oil Tommy", "Pop Goes the Weasel", and "Rosalie, the Prairie Flower" were sung to the audience, they sang also to David Belasco, who put a bit of himself, of his own life story into the play.

In November, 1904, Mr. Belasco was writing Miss Blanche Bates, appearing on tour in "The Darling of the Gods", that he wanted to talk over with her the details of her new play. By July, 1905, he was able to send her word that "it is a *bully* play" and that "the character of '*the girl*' is sky-high, fits her

from her head to her feet." It is "my very best," he declared. In after years he wrote: "I know the period of Forty-nine as I know my alphabet, and there are things in my 'The Girl of the Golden West' truer than many of the incidents in Bret Harte." Thus he replied to some criticism that challenged his accuracy.

So this drama, written with Miss Bates in mind ("There are some beautiful speeches in the play," he told her, "very Batesesque"), grew out of the romantic adventure of his past. Into its outward visualization he put all the drama of the days gone by, creating atmosphere by means of every resource of the theatre he could bring to bear upon it. He had here California color and warmth to deal with, instead of Japan. To him as a producer, Nature is a very elusive mistress, difficult to capture by incandescence, not so difficult to suggest by other accessories. Drop curtains, moving scenery, and music steeped the audience in the "feel" of the situation. Before the play began, Mr. Belasco had stamped it of California by a Californian, as later he was to stamp "The Rose of the Rancho", which he wrote with Richard Walton Tully. "My youth surged upon me while I worked," confessed the dramatist.

"The Girl of the Golden West" opened at the Belasco Theatre, Pittsburgh, on October 3, 1905, and came to New York, the Belasco Theatre, November 14. The papers discussed the authenticity of its frontier character; but there was no gainsaying the fact that, as melodrama, it was good theatre. The producer in Mr. Belasco has always seen to that. Loud were the praises for his "theatrical sagacity." This conjuror of atmosphere never lost points; his total effects were gained from the unqualified care bestowed upon each detail. He was always alert to improve opportunities. The period of playwriting marked by "The Girl of the Golden West" was the culmination of the picturesque excellence of Mr. Belasco.

It happened that once more Puccini was in this country, searching for a new opera libretto. It was January, 1907, and "The Girl" — which had instantly become a popular success — was playing a return New York engagement at the old Academy of Music on Fourteenth Street. Miss Frances Starr, in "The

Photo. Byron, N. Y.

DAVID BELASCO

At work on a play in his studio.

Rose of the Rancho", was at the Belasco Theatre. The Italian composer seriously considered both dramas, but finally chose "The Girl", which, later, from Paris he said he admired very greatly. So a libretto was devised by Signori G. Zangarini and C. Cirinni, and "La Fanciulla del West" was given its American première, December 10, 1910, at the Metropolitan Opera House, with an added scene, which brought into the melodramatic excitement the imminence of lynch law.

Once more, Mr. Belasco found himself a quasi-opera director, for he lent to the Metropolitan rehearsals all the ripe experience he had. He trained Caruso painstakingly; and he found these opera folk — so many of them not real actors in technique — eager to be rehearsed. On the opening night, with Signors Puccini, Toscanini, Gatti-Cazazza, this son of the Golden West took his curtain call, recipient of a testimonial album from the Metropolitan directors. This opening represented for Mr. Belasco more than one conquest, for had any one been behind the scenes during rehearsals, they would have witnessed a stage director whose word was uninterrupted law, yet being courteously interrupted by the autocratic baton of Toscanini, — and Destinn, Caruso and Amato entering whole-heartedly into the new technique, which was different from that which marks opera. To sing was opera. But to act and sing with equal fervor and excellence was a problem which Mr. Belasco went about to solve and to conquer.

THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

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THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

A PLAY, IN FOUR ACTS

By David Belasco

"In those strange days, people coming from — God knows where, joined forces in that far western land, and, according to the rude custom of the camp, their very names were soon lost and unrecorded, and here they struggled, laughed, gambled, cursed, killed, loved and worked out their strange destinies in a manner incredible to us of to-day. Of one thing only are we sure — they lived!"

Early History of California.

CAST

The Girl	Blanche Bates
Wowkle, the Fox, *Billy's squaw*	Harriet Sterling
Dick Johnson, *a stranger (Ramerrez, the road-agent)*	Robert Hilliard
Jack Rance, *gambler and sheriff*	Frank Keenan
Sonora Slim	John W. Cope
Trinidad Joe	James Kirkwood
Nick, *bartender at the "Polka"*	Thomas J. McGrane
The Sidney Duck, *a faro dealer*	Horace James
Jim Larkens	Fred. Maxwell
"Happy" Haliday	Richard Hoyer
"Handsome" Charlie	Clifford Hipple
Deputy Sheriff	T. Hayes Hunter
Billy Jackrabbit, *an Indian*	J. H. Benrimo
Ashby, *Wells-Fargo agent*	J. Al. Sawtelle
José Castro, *ex-padrona of the bull fights and horse-breaker, now with Ramerrez's band*	Roberto Deshon
Rider of the Pony Express	Lowell Sherman
Jake Wallace, *a traveling camp minstrel*	Ed. A. Tester
Bucking Billy, *from Watson's*	A. M. Beattie
The Lookout	Fred. Sidney
A Faro Dealer	William Wild
The Ridge Boy	Ira M. Flick

Joe	H. L. Wilson
Concertina Player	Ignazio Biondi

Citizens of the Camp and Boys of the Ridge

Time. *During the days of the gold fever, 1849–1850.*
Place. *Cloudy Mountain, California, a mining camp.*

First Picture. In the Sierras. A glimpse of the home of The Girl on Cloudy Mountain.

Second Picture. At the foot of Cloudy Mountain, showing the place of business of the Girl. The "Polka" saloon.

ACT I

In the "Polka" saloon. Twelve o'clock at night. The Girl and the Stranger.

ACT II

In the home of the Girl, one o'clock in the morning. "Two people who came from nothing."

ACT III

The dance-hall of the "Polka." A few days later. Nine o'clock in the morning.

"No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always may be what we might have been."

ACT IV

The Last Picture. The boundless prairies of the West. At the dawn of a day about a week later.

"Oh, my beautiful West —
Oh, my California!"

THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

(Puccini's Opera)

Metropolitan Opera House, New York

CAST

Minnie	Emmy Destinn
Dick Johnson (*Ramerrez, the road-agent*)	Enrico Caruso
Jack Rance	Pasquale Amato
Nick, *bartender at the "Polka"*	Albert Reiss

ASHBY, *Wells-Fargo agent*		Adamo Didur
SONORA	*Miners*	Dinh Gilly
TRIN		Angelo Bada
SID		Giulio Rossi
BELLO		Vincenzo Reschiglian
HARRY		Pietro Audisio
JOE		Glenn Hall
HAPPY		Antonio Pini-Corsi
LARKENS		Bernard Bégué
BILLY, *an Indian*		Georges Bourgeois
WOWKLE, *his squaw*		Marie Mattfeld
JAKE WALLACE, *a minstrel*		Andrea de Segurola
JOSÉ CASTRO		Edoardo Missiano
THE PONY EXPRESS RIDER		Lamberto Belleri

Men of the Camp and Boys of the Ridge

CONDUCTOR — Arturo Toscanini

ACT I

The two scenes, which precede the dialogue of the play, are not drawn in detail but are merely a few lines and lights to show the steep snow-tipped Sierras, the trail, the silent California night, deep ravines, and cabins of the miners of '49 hid amongst the manzanitas and pines; in fact, the scene represents a little world by itself, drawn in a few crude strokes, to explain more than the author could tell in a thousand pages.

The curtain rises to a glimpse of Cloudy Mountain, in the Sierras. The peak is white, the sky above very blue, and the moon, which seems strangely near, shines on the steep trail leading up to the cabin of the Girl. A lamp, placed in the cabin window by Wowkle, the squaw, shows that the Girl has not yet come home from her place of business, the Polka Saloon.

This scene shifts to an exterior view of the Polka Saloon and the miners' cabins at the foot of Cloudy Mountain. The cheerful glow of kerosene lamps, the rattle of poker chips, and an occasional "whoop", show that life in the Polka is in full swing. The strains of "Dooda Day" are heard from within, the singer accompanying himself on the concertina:

"Camptown ladies, sing this song,
Dooda! Dooda!
Camptown race track, five miles long,
Dooda! Dooda! Day.
G'wine to run all night,
G'wine to run all day,
Bet my money on a bob-tail nag,
Somebody bet on the bay."

As the scene shifts to the interior of the Polka, we see a large square barroom, built of rough pine boards. A pair of scales for

weighing gold-dust, and a dice-box used to "shake for drinks", are on the bar. Behind the bar on a shelf are liquors, cigars, and chewing tobacco.

The till contains one and two bit pieces, Mexican dollars, and slugs of gold ($50). The safe is made out of an empty whiskey keg. Boxes and cans of provisions lie on the floor, and strings of red peppers hang from the rude rafters. A stuffed grizzly bear graces the scene, a small green parasol in one paw, a battered old silk hat on its head. An odd collection of hats and caps are stuck on the prongs of a pair of elk antlers on the wall, and several saddles lie on the floor under the antlers.

The furniture is composed of pine chairs, a faro table, a poker table, and an old whittled desk at which the miners write their rare letters to those at home.

A $5000 reward for the road-agent, Ramerrez, or information leading to his capture, signed by Wells-Fargo, is tacked to the back of the door. The platform on which a camp minstrel is singing "Dooda Day" is protected by a piece of sheet iron which the musician can lift as a shield to ward off stray bullets in case of a sudden quarrel. The room is heated by a blazing pine log fire in an adobe fireplace. A square opening in the wall leads to the dance-hall left; a ladder, resting against a balcony over the bar, enables the bartender to ascend in case of trouble and cast a quick glance over both rooms.

As the interior of the barroom is disclosed, Sonora Slim, a tall, lanky miner with an emphatic manner, and Trinidad Joe, his partner, are playing at faro. The dealer is "Sid", an Australian known as "Sidney Duck", fat, greasy, unctuous, and cowardly. He is an expert at fancy shuffling. His even voice is heard from time to time, murmuring below the dialogue, as the game goes on. A case-keeper and lookout complete the group at the faro table. Billy Jackrabbit, a full-blooded Indian, lazy, shifty, and beady eyed, wearing moccasins, odds and ends of a white man's costume, and a quantity of brass jewelry, is watching the game. He frequents the barroom, picking up cigar butts, and occasionally, when the opportunity presents itself, steals a drink.

Handsome Charlie, a big picturesque miner, is drinking at the

bar with Happy Haliday, a long-legged fellow, high-booted and spurred. Nick, the bartender, is busy during the act carrying drink into the dance-hall and returning to those in the barroom. He wears 'Frisco trousers, very high-heeled boots, a flashy necktie, a gay velvet vest. He combs his hair over his forehead in a cowlick.

SONORA (*Joining the singer who is accompanying himself on the concertina*). "Dooda! Dooda! Day!" (*To the faro-dealer.*) What did that last eight do?

SID. Lose.

SONORA. Well, let the tail go with the hide.

(*Nick, who has entered, sets a few fresh candles about and gives a drink to the concertina player who goes into the dance-hall.*)

TRINIDAD. How many times did the ace win?

SID. Three times.

BILLY JACKRABBIT. Give Billy Jackrabbit four two dolla — Mexican — chips.

(*Sidney gives some chips to the Indian. As the music starts in the dance-hall, and the shuffling of feet is heard, Happy, unable to resist, gives a long whoop.*)

HAPPY. Root hog or die!

(*With another whoop, he joins the dancers. Handsome would follow him, but decides to remain to take another drink.*)

SONORA (*Suspiciously*). See here, gamboleer Sid, you 're too lucky.

TRINIDAD. You bet! More chips, Australiar.

(*Sid gives some chips to Trinidad. The proprietor of a wheel-of-fortune, which is set up in the dance-hall, is heard to call in a professional voice.*)

PROPRIETOR OF THE WHEEL-OF-FORTUNE. And round goes the wheel!

HAPPY'S VOICE (*Heard above the music*). Git, you loafer!

(*A muffled shot is heard. The music stops abruptly.*)

A VOICE (*From the dance-hall*). Missed!

(*Nick hastens off, not forgetting to take a bottle and glasses with him. During the excitement, Billy Jackrabbit steals four cigars from a box on the bar.*)

THE PROPRIETOR OF THE WHEEL-OF-FORTUNE. The lone star now rises!

(*The music continues and Nick re-enters, giving the Indian a suspicious glance. Billy Jackrabbit decides to take himself off for a short time.*)

NICK (*Explaining as loud whoops are heard*). Boys from the Ridge — cuttin' up in the dance-hall. Hy're you, Jim?

(*Jim Larkens, shabby and despondent, a miner who has not struck it rich, returns Nick's greeting, gets paper, a pen and ink from the bar, and sits at the desk to write the usual sad letter to his family in the East.*)

SONORA (*Looking towards the dancers with disgust*). I don't dance with men for partners. When I chassay, Trinidad, I want a femi*nine* piece of flesh and blood — with garters on!

TRINIDAD. You bet!

SONORA. I say, Nick. (*Going up to the bar, confidentially.*) Has the Girl said anything more about me to-day?

NICK (*Lying as usual*). Well, you got the first chance.

SONORA (*Grinning*). Yes? Cigars for the boys.

(*Nick brings a box of cigars to the faro table, and the men smoke.*)

VOICE OF THE FIDDLER (*Calling in time to the dance music*).

> "First lady swing with the right hand gent,
> With the left hand gent, with the right hand gent,
> First lady swing with the left hand gent,
> And — lady in the center, and gents all around!"

(*During this, two men from the rival mining camp at the Ridge, enter — dancing up to the bar.*)

SID. Hello, boys! 'Ow's things at the Ridge?

ONE OF THE RIDGE MEN (*Defiantly*). Wipes this camp off the map.

(*All jump to their feet, save Sid. The insult calls for immediate punishment.*)

SONORA. What?

TRINIDAD. Say it again!

(*Nick persuades the Ridge boys to retire to avert bloodshed, and they disappear with a final defiant whoop as Jake Wallace, a*

favorite camp minstrel, who journeys from one camp to another, is heard in the road outside, playing on his banjo and singing.)

JAKE WALLACE.

"Wait for the wagon — wait for the wagon —
Wait for the wagon and we'll all take a ride.
Wait for the wagon, and we'll all take a ride."

NICK (*Announcing in extravagant style*). Aw! Here he is, boys — just up from the Ridge — Jake Wallace, the camp favorite!

(*Jake Wallace enters, carrying a banjo, his face half blackened. He wears a long minstrel's duster over his heavy coat, flapping shoes, and a "stovepipe" hat. He is the typical camp minstrel.*)

SONORA. Howdy, Jake!

HANDSOME. Hello, Jake, old man! How be you?

TRINIDAD, SID *and the* CASE-KEEPER. Hello, Jake!

JAKE (*Nods, smiling, seats himself on the musician's stand, in the musician's chair*). Hello, boys! My first selection, friends, will be, "The little —"

SONORA. Aw — give us "Old Dog Tray", Jake.

(*Jake tunes up.*)

TRINIDAD (*Apart to Nick*). Nick, have you saw the Girl?

NICK (*Confidentially*). Well, I gave her your message. You've got the best chance.

(*Digs him playfully in the ribs and winks at him.*)

TRINIDAD. Whiskey for everybody.

(*Nick sets out whiskey and glasses, and the men drink.*)

JAKE (*Strikes a chord, announcing impressively*). "Old Dog Tray, or Echoes from Home."

(*During the song, Billy Jackrabbit, who has followed Jake on, sits on the floor playing solitaire. The miners continue to gamble.*)

"How often do I picture
Them old folks down to home;
And often wonder if they think of me!"

(*Jim Larkens, dropping his letter in the box on the floor, chokes back a sob.*)

SONORA. Slug's worth of chips.

(*Sid gives chips to Sonora.*)

JAKE.

"Would angel mother know me,
If back there I did roam?
Would old dog Tray remember me?"

(*The singer pauses to take a drink from Nick.*)

Now, boys!

(*All join in the chorus, keeping time with their feet.*)

ALL.

"Oh, mother, angel mother, are you a-waitin' there,
Beside the littul cottage on the lea?"

JAKE (*Alone*). "On the lea —"

ALL.

"How often would she bless me, all in them days so fair —
Would old dog Tray remember me?"

SONORA. "Remember me!"

(*Larkens breaks down and sobs. All stop playing and turn in their chairs, looking at him.*)

Why, Jim . . .

LARKENS. Say, boys, — I'm homesick and I'm broke, and I don't give a damn who knows it. I want to go home again. . . . I'm tired o' drillin' rocks. . . I want to be out in the fields again. . . . I want to see the grain growin'. . . . I want the dirt in the furrows at home. . . . I want old Pennsylvany. . . . I want my folks. . . . I'm done! I'm done! I'm done!

(*He sobs on the bar, his face buried in his hands.*)

JAKE (*Quite used to these scenes*).

"Oh, mother, angel mother, are you a-waitin' —"

SONORA (*Motions Jake to stop singing. Jake, understanding, smilingly makes a gesture as though touching an imaginary hat brim, and collects his money*). Here, Jake. (*Tosses a coin to Jake.*) Boys, Jim Larkens allows he's goin' back East. Chip in. (*The miners and gamblers throw money on the table. When*

the cash is handed to Sonora, he gives it to Larkens.) Here you are, Jim.

JIM (*Deeply touched*). Thank you, boys — thank you. (*Crying, he stumbles out of the room.*)

TRINIDAD (*Who has suddenly made a lunge at Sid's card box*). That ain't a square deal — he's cheating! (*Billy Jackrabbit picks up a chair, and holds it up to protect himself; Jake Wallace hides behind the shield. The lookout steals out as though in league with Sid. Nick re-enters with a large tray of whiskey glasses. Handsome and the gambler seize Sid and bring him down in front of the table.*)

SONORA. Lift his hand!

TRINIDAD. Hist his arms! (*Taking up the deck of cards and throwing it on the table.*) There!

SONORA. String him up!

TRINIDAD. You bet!

SID (*Whining*). For 'eaven's sike!

NICK. Chicken lifter!

TRINIDAD. String him!

SID. Oh, boys! Boys!

RANCE (*Who has come in, stands impassively watching the scene. He is the cool, waxen, deliberate gambler. His hands, almost feminine in their whiteness, are as waxen as his face. He has a very black moustache. He wears the beaver hat of the times, and an immaculate suit of broadcloth. His boots are highly polished, long and narrow with high heels, his trousers strapped over them. He wears a white puffed shirt, with a diamond stud held by side chains, and a large diamond flashes on his hand. He smokes the Spanish cigarros*). Well, gentlemen, what's this?

SONORA. Ah! Here's Jack Rance.

TRINIDAD (*Threatening Sid*). The Sheriff!

RANCE. What's the matter with the cyards? (*He takes out his handkerchief, delicately unfolding it, and flicks it over his boots.*)

SONORA. The Sidney Duck's cheated.

TRINIDAD. String him! (*To Sid.*) Come on, — you!

RANCE. Wait a minute. Don't be hasty, gentlemen. I've got

something to say about this. I don't forget, although I am Sheriff of Manzanita County, that I'm running four games. It's men like him cast reflections on square-minded sporting men like myself; and worse — he casts reflections on the Polka, the establishment of the one decent woman in Cloudy.

NICK (*Indignant*). You bet!

SONORA. A lady, damn it! (*Turning on Sid.*) You lily-covered skunk!

TRINIDAD. String him up!

HANDSOME. Come on!

(*There is a general movement towards Sid.*)

RANCE. Hold on! Hold on! After all, gents, what's death? A kick and you're off. I've thought of a worse punishment. Give him his coat. (*Handsome gives a coat to Sid, who puts it on.*) Stand him over here. (*Sid is pushed forward.*) Hand me the deuce of spades. (*Sonora gives Rance the card. Rance takes a pin from Sid's cravat, and pins the card over Sid's heart.*) I place it over his heart as a warning. He can't leave the camp, and he never plays cyards again. Handsome, pass the word to the boys.

(*Handsome goes into the dance-hall to spread the news.*)

SID (*Sniffs imploringly*). Ow — now! Don't say that! Don't say that!

NICK (*Pointing to the door*). Git! Git!

(*Sid leaves the room hurriedly, followed by Billy Jackrabbit, who is never quite comfortable when the Sheriff is laying down the law. Jake Wallace, one eye on the would-be lynchers, is softly playing "Pop Goes the Weasel."*)

RANCE (*Coolly, as though nothing had occurred*). Well, gentlemen, a little game of poker, just for social recreation? Nick, chips.

SONORA. Ha! I'm your Injun!

(*Goes to the poker table as Nick brings down the poker chips.*)

TRINIDAD (*Joining Rance*). That's me!

(*But before the game can proceed, a Deputy Sheriff enters, a gaunt, hollow cheeked, muscular man, with a heavy, sweeping moustache, his hair in a cowlick — wearing a pale, faded beaver*

hat and a heavy overcoat, his pistol and powder flask in his belt.)

DEPUTY (*To Rance*). Sheriff, Ashby, of Wells-Fargo, just rode in with his posse.

RANCE. Ashby? Why, what's he doing here?

DEPUTY. He's after Ramerrez.

RANCE. Ramerrez? Oh, that polite road-agent that's been visitin' the other camps?

DEPUTY. Yes, they say he has just turned into our county. (*Nick gives the Deputy a drink.*)

SONORA (*Apprehensively*). What? Our county?

(*Ashby enters, — a man to remember, — nervous, dogged, white and closely-cropped hair, very black eyebrows — thin lips. He wears 'Frisco clothing, which shows the wear and tear of the road. He is suave in his greetings, but quick in action and speech. He is never sober, never drunk, but continually drinking.*)

ASHBY (*Greeting Rance*). Hello, Sheriff!

RANCE. Boys, Mr. Ashby, of Wells-Fargo.

(*Ashby shakes hands with Trinidad and Sonora, then makes for the bar.*)

ASHBY. Hello, Nick!

NICK. Hello, Ash!

ASHBY (*To the Deputy*). How are you, sir? (*Deputy returns Ashby's greeting and passes off, as Ashby shakes hands warmly with Nick.*) Nick, give us a drink.

NICK. Sure.

(*Takes four glasses and a bottle of whiskey to the poker table and then hastens off into the dance-hall.*)

ASHBY. Everybody'll have the same. (*The camp minstrel joins the group as Rance pours the whiskey.*) Well, gentlemen, I trust the Girl who runs the Polka is well?

SONORA. Fine as silk, Mr. Ashby. How long you been chasin' up this here road-agent?

ASHBY. Oh, he only took to the road three months ago. Wells-Fargo have had me and a posse busy ever since. He's a wonder.

SONORA. Must be, to evade *you*.

ASHBY. Yes, I can smell a road-agent in the wind; but, Rance, I expect to get that fellow right here in your county.

RANCE. Is this Ramerrez a Spaniard?

ASHBY. No, can't prove it. Heads a crew of greasers and Spaniards. His name's assumed.

RANCE. They say he robs you like a gentleman.

ASHBY (*Lifting his glass*). Well, look out for the greasers up the road!

(*All drink.*)

RANCE. We don't let 'em pass through here.

ASHBY. Well, boys, I've had a long ride. Wake me up when the Pony Express goes through.

(*Takes off his coat, goes up to a table, and, setting a bottle of whiskey in a convenient spot, lies down on the table.*)

NICK (*Bringing in a kettle of hot water and glasses containing whiskey and lemon*). Regards of the Girl. Hot whiskey with lemming extract.

(*He pours the hot water into the glasses.*)

RANCE (*Accepting a glass*). Gentlemen, the Girl! The only girl in the Camp — the girl I mean to make Mrs. Jack Rance!

(*Nick catches Sonora's eye, also Trinidad's.*)

SONORA. That's a joke, Rance. She makes you look like a Chinaman.

RANCE (*Rising, at white heat*). You prove that!

SONORA. In what particular spot will you have it?

(*Instantly Rance's right hand creeps towards his pistol as Sonora, anticipating his movement, has reached for his weapon. Trinidad runs to the bar and drops behind it as Nick crouches out of sight at one end of it. Jake Wallace hides behind the shield.*)

NICK (*Seeing The Girl coming in through the dance-hall*). The Girl. . . . (*Coaxingly.*) Aw — take your drinks.

(*Trinidad and Jake venture to peep out. The quarrel is over.*)

RANCE. Ha! Ha! Ha! Once more, Friends, — the Girl!

ALL. The Girl!

(*They drink. Ashby snores peacefully.*)

(*The Girl enters. The character of The Girl is rather complex.*

Her utter frankness takes away all suggestion of vice — showing her to be unsmirched, happy, careless, untouched by the life about her. Yet she has a thorough knowledge of what the men of her world generally want. She is used to flattery — knows exactly how to deal with men — is very shrewd — but quite capable of being a good friend to the camp boys.)

(*Handsome follows her and stands leaning against the bar, watching her admiringly.*)

GIRL. Hello, boys! How's everything? Gettin' taken care of?

SONORA (*Who melts whenever he sees her*). Hello, Girl!

GIRL. Hello, Sonora!

TRINIDAD. Hello, Girl!

GIRL. Hello, Trin.

SONORA. Mix me a prairie oyster.

GIRL. I'll fix you right up, Sonora. (*As shots are heard in the dance-hall.*) Say, Nick — you quiet things down. (*Nick leaves the room.*) They've had about enough. Look here, Sonora: before I crack this egg, I'd like to state that eggs is four bits apiece — only two hens left. (*Giving a little push to Handsome, who has been leaning on the bar.*) Oh, run away, Handsome.

(*Handsome sits, watching The Girl.*)

SONORA. Crack the egg — I'll stand it.

NICK (*Re-entering, grinning, pouring out a drink, going to The Girl.*) Regards of Blond Harry.

GIRL (*Taking it*). Here: give it to me — (*pouring it back into the bottle*) — and say it hit the spot.

NICK (*Whispering*). Say, Min: throw around a few kind words — good for the bar.

GIRL (*Good-naturedly*). Oh, you! (*Exit Nick to deliver The Gir"s message to Blond Harry.*) Ha! Ha! (*As Ashby awakens.*) Hello, Mr. Ashby!

ASHBY (*Rousing and gallantly picking up his glass, goes to the bar to toast The Girl*). Compliments of Wells-Fargo!

GIRL. Thank you. (*Shaking Sonora's drink.*) You see we live high shouldered here in Cloudy.

SONORA. You bet!

ASHBY. What cigars have you?

GIRL. Regalias, Auroras and Eurekas.

ASHBY. Any'll do.

NICK (*Entering hurriedly*). Man jest come in threatin' to shoot up the furniture.

GIRL (*Quietly, giving Ashby a cigar*). Who is it?

NICK. Old man Watson.

GIRL. Leave him shoot. He's good for it.

VOICE (*From the inner room*). Nick! Nick!

(*Nick hastens off as several shots are heard. In the excitement, Billy Jackrabbit, who has re-entered, quietly steals down to the faro table and drains a glass of whiskey which has been left standing there.*)

GIRL. Here, you Billy Jackrabbit: what are you doing? Did you marry my squaw yet?

BILLY JACKRABBIT. Not so much married squaw yet.

GIRL. No so much married? Come here, you thieving redskin — (*Billy Jackrabbit goes up to the bar*) with a pocketful of my best cigars! (*She takes the cigars from him.*) You git up to my cabin and marry my squaw before I get there. Git! (*Billy Jackrabbit goes out.*) With a papoose six months old — it's awful! Here, Sonora: (*bringing him the drink*) here's your prairie oyster. Hello, Rance!

RANCE. Hello, Girl!

SONORA. Here, Girl: clear the slate out of that. (*Giving her a bag of gold-dust.*)

NICK (*Re-entering with a bottle*). Say, they's a fellow in there wants to know if we can help out on provisions.

GIRL. Sure. What does he want?

NICK. Bread.

(*Putting the cigar-box and the bottle back on the shelf.*)

GIRL (*Behind the bar*). Bread! Does he think we're runnin' a bakery?

NICK. Then he asked for sardines.

GIRL. Sardines! Great Gilead! You tell him we have nothing but straight provisions here: we got pickled oysters, smoking tobacco, an' the best whiskey he ever saw.

NICK. Yes'm.

TRINIDAD. You bet!

GIRL. Sonora. (*Gives him his change. Cleaning the slate on which she keeps the record of the drinks.*) Mr. Ashby, — change. (*She hands Ashby some coins.*)

ASHBY (*Throws the money back on the bar*). Keep the change. Buy a ribbon at the Ridge. Compliments of Wells-Fargo.

GIRL (*Sweeping it into the drawer*). Thank you.

SONORA. Girl: (*going up to the bar*) buy *two* ribbons at the Ridge. (*Throwing down a stack of silver dollars on the bar and facing Ashby. Insinuatingly.*) Fawn's *my* color! . . .

GIRL. Thank you.

RANCE. Play cyards.

ASHBY (*Changing — raising his finger warningly*). You, Girl! You must bank with us oftener, and then if this road-agent, Ramerrez, should drop in, you won't lose so much.

SONORA. The devil!

TRINIDAD (*Thoughtfully*). Ha!

GIRL. Oh, go on! I keep the specie in an empty keg now, but personally I've took to banking in my stocking.

NICK (*Who has brought in an armful of wood and mended the fire*). Say, we've got an awful pile this month — makes me sort o' nervous. Why, Sonora alone has got ten thousand in that keg fer safe keepin'. (*Pointing to a keg at the end of the bar.*)

ASHBY. And Ramerrez' band everywhere!

GIRL. Bet if a road-agent come in here, I could offer him a drink an' he'd treat me like a perfect lady.

SONORA. You bet he would, the darned old halibut!

NICK. Tobacco.

GIRL. Solace or Honeydew?

NICK. Dew. (*He takes it and is about to exit when the Deputy enters wildly.*)

DEPUTY. Boys! Boys! Pony Express!

(*The sound of the approaching pony has grown louder, and now stops quickly.*)

DRIVER OF THE PONY EXPRESS (*Heard off*). Hello!

(*Nick runs out.*)

DEPUTY'S VOICE (*Outside*). Hello!

DRIVER OF THE PONY EXPRESS (*Unseen, speaking through the open door as though on horseback*). Big hold-up last night at the Forks.

TRINIDAD. Hold-up?

DRIVER OF THE PONY EXPRESS. Ramerrez!

(*Enter Nick with several letters and one newspaper. He gives the mail to The Girl and goes to the bar.*)

SONORA. Ramerrez!

ASHBY (*To The Girl*). You see?

DRIVER OF THE PONY EXPRESS (*Still out of sight*). Look sharp! There's a greaser in the trail.

RANCE. A greaser? Deputy, go find him.

GIRL (*Looking over the mail*). Sonora, you got a newspaper.

(*Sonora receives it joyously.*)

DRIVER OF THE PONY EXPRESS. So long!

ASHBY (*Going to the door — calls*). Pony Express: I want you.

HANDSOME (*Leaning over Sonora — enviously*). Sonora's got a newspaper.

SONORA. Yes — damn thing's two months old.

HANDSOME (*Wistfully*). Still, he *did* get a newspaper.

(*The Driver of the Pony Express enters, coming quickly towards Ashby. He is a thin young fellow of twenty — his skin deeply tanned by the wind — smooth-faced but unshaven. His clothing is weather-beaten and faded by wind, rain, dust and alkali. A leather patch is stitched over the seat of his breeches. His shabby leather gloves proclaim hard service. He is booted and spurred, and has a pistol in his belt. He carries a mail pouch.*)

ASHBY. You drop mail at the greaser settlement?

DRIVER OF THE PONY EXPRESS. Yes, sir — tough place.

ASHBY. Know a girl there named Nina Micheltoreña?

GIRL (*Laughs*). Nina Micheltoreña? Oh, they all know her. Whoo! She's one of them Cachuca girls, with droopy Spanish eyes. Oh, ask the boys about her! (*She slaps Handsome and Trinidad on the back.*)

(*The music starts in the dance-hall and The Girl runs off to see that her patrons are enjoying the evening. Handsome, Sonora and Trinidad follow her off.*)

ASHBY (*To the Driver of the Pony Express*). Hold her letters.

DRIVER OF THE PONY EXPRESS. Yes, sir. (*He hastens off to ride to the next camp.*)

ASHBY (*To Rance*). Sheriff: I expect to see this Nina Micheltoreña to-night — here — in the Polka.

RANCE. You do? Well, the boys better look out for their watches. I met that lady once.

ASHBY. She wrote about that five thousand reward I offered for Ramerrez.

RANCE. What! She's after that? (*Shuffling the cards.*)

ASHBY. She knows something. (*Getting his coat. To The Girl who has re-entered and gone behind the bar.*) Well, I'll have a look at that greaser up the road. He may have his eye on the find in that stocking of yours.

GIRL (*Good-naturedly*). You be darned!

(*Ashby goes out.*)

RANCE. Say, Minnie —

GIRL (*Polishing glasses*). H'm?

RANCE. Will you marry me?

GIRL. Nop.

RANCE (*Going to the bar*). Why not?

GIRL. 'Cause you got a wife in Noo Orleans — or so the mountain breezes say.

RANCE. Give me some cigars.

GIRL (*Handing him cigars from a certain box*). Them's your kind, Jack.

RANCE (*Putting the cigars in his case*). I'm stuck on you.

GIRL (*Lightly*). Thank you.

RANCE. I'm going to marry you.

GIRL. Think so?

RANCE. H'm . . . (*Lighting a cigar.*)

GIRL. They ain't a man here goin' to marry me.

NICK (*Entering hurriedly*). One good cigar.

GIRL (*Handing a cigar to Nick*). Here's your poison. Three bits. (*To Rance.*) Why, look at 'em. There's Handsome: got two wives I know of somewhere East — (*Turning suddenly to Nick.*) Who's that cigar for?

NICK. Tommy!

GIRL. Give it back. He don't know a good cigar when he's smoking it. (*She puts the cigar back in the box, takes another and hands it to Nick.*) Same price. (*Nick goes off with the cigar.*) And Trin with a widder in Sacramento; and you — Ha! Not one of you travelin' under your own name.

NICK (*Comes back, grinning*). One whiskey.

GIRL (*Pouring out the whiskey and giving it to Nick*). Here you be.

NICK. With water.

GIRL (*Putting the bottle back*). No, no, you don't: no fancy drinks here.

NICK. Feller just rode in from the Crossin' — says he wants it with water.

GIRL. He'll take it straight, or git!

NICK. But he won't git.

GIRL. You send him to me — I'll curl his hair for him!

NICK. Yes'm. (*Exit.*)

RANCE (*Earnestly*). Give you a thousand dollars on the spot for a kiss.

GIRL. Some men invite bein' played.

RANCE. Well, what are men made for? (*Putting down a gold piece.*)

GIRL (*Taking it*). That's true.

RANCE. You can't keep on running this place alone — it's getting too big for you. Too much money circulating through the Polka. You need a man behind you. Marry me.

GIRL. Nop.

RANCE. My wife won't know it.

GIRL. Nop.

RANCE. Now, see here, Min —

GIRL (*Firmly*). No — take it straight, Jack — nop! Ah, come along: start your game again, Jack. Come along. (*Going to the faro table, Rance following her.*) Whoop la! Mula! Good Lord, look at that faro table!

RANCE. Listen: we may not have another chance.

GIRL. Look here, Jack: let's have it right now. I run this

Polka alone because I like it. My father taught me the business, and — well, don't worry about me — I can look after myself. I carry my little wepping — (*Touching her pocket to show that she has a pistol.*) I'm independent — I'm happy — the Polka's paying an' — ha! — it's all bully! Say, what the devil do you mean proposin' to me with a wife in Noo Orleans? Now, this is a respectable saloon — an' I don't want no more of that talk.

RANCE. I didn't say nothin'.

GIRL (*Tidying the faro table*). Push me that queen. (*Rance slowly hands the card to her and, going to the table, leans thoughtfully against a chair.*) Thank you, Jack. No offense, Jack; but I got other idees of married life from what you have.

RANCE. Aw! Nonsense!

GIRL (*Leaning against the faro table, facing Rance*). I dunno about that. You see I had a home once, and I ain't forgot it. A home up over our little saloon in Soledad. Ha! I ain't forgot my father an' mother an' what a happy married couple they was. Lord! How they loved each other — it was beautiful!

SID (*Entering, snivelling*). Ow, Miss . . .

GIRL. Say — I've heard about you — you git! (*Sid hastily takes his departure. To Rance.*) I can see Mother now . . . fussin' over Father an' pettin' him, an' Father dealin' faro — Ah, but he was square . . . and me, a kid as little as a kitten, under the table sneakin' chips for candy. Talk about married life! That was a little heaven. I guess everybody's got some remembrance of their mother tucked away. I always see mine at the faro table with her foot snuggled up to Dad's an' the light of lovin' in her eyes. Ah, she was a lady! No; (*getting up from the table and going behind the bar*) I couldn't share that table an' the Polka with any man — unless there was a heap o' carin' back of it. I couldn't, Jack, I couldn't.

RANCE (*Restraining his anger*). Oh, the boys were right! I *am* a Chinaman! (*Following her up to the bar.*)

GIRL. No, you're not, Jack.

RANCE (*Following her*). But once when I rode in here, it was nothing but Jack — Jack — Jack — Jack — Jack Rance! God! I nearly got you then.

GIRL (*With playful sarcasm*). Did you?

RANCE. Then you went on that trip to Sacramento and Monterey . . . and you changed. . . . Who's the man?

GIRL. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

RANCE. One of them high-toned Sacramento shrimps? (*As she laughs.*) Do you think he'd have *you?*

GIRL (*Suddenly serious.*) What's the matter with me? Anythin' about me a high-toned gent would object to? Look here, Jack Rance, ain't I always been a perfect lady?

RANCE. Oh, heaven knows your character's all right. (*He goes back to the faro table.*)

GIRL (*Sarcastically*). Well, that ain't your fault. Adios. (*She starts to leave the room, then pauses and looks at him.*) Jack . . . (*As he will not look at her, she turns again to go into the dance-hall, but, looking off, she sees an unexpected guest and exclaims in surprise.*) H'mp! Utopia! (*She goes behind the bar.*) (*Mr. Johnson enters the room from the dance-hall. He is a young man of about 30 — smooth-faced, tall. His clothing is bought in fashionable Sacramento. He is the one man in the place who has the air of a gentleman. At first acquaintance, he bears himself easily but modestly, yet at certain moments there is a devil-may-care recklessness about him. He is, however, the last man in the world one would suspect of being the road-agent, Ramerrez.*)

JOHNSON. Where's the man who wanted to curl my hair? (*Rance turns to look at the stranger.*)

GIRL (*Who remembers Johnson as a man she met on the road to Monterey*). Hello — er — stranger. (*Johnson looks at The Girl.*)

RANCE. We're not much on strangers here.

JOHNSON. I'm the man who wanted water in his whiskey.

GIRL. You, eh? (*To Nick who comes back with a bottle and glasses.*) Oh, — er — Nick, this gentleman takes his whiskey as he likes it.

NICK. Moses!

JOHNSON (*Coming to the bar*). In the presence of a lady — I will take — nothing. (*Bows to her with formality.*) Pardon me, but you seem to be almost at home here.

(*Nick laughs softly.*)

GIRL (*Amused*). Who — me? (*Leaning on the bar.*)

NICK (*Laughing*). Why, she's the Girl who runs the Polka. (*He passes off, still laughing.*)

JOHNSON (*Staring at The Girl*). You?

GIRL. Yep.

JOHNSON (*Meditating*). The Girl who runs the Polka. . . .

(*There is a merry twinkle in The Girl's eye as she looks at Johnson, but he is disconcerted. This news interferes with Mr. Johnson's plans.*)

GIRL. Yes.

RANCE. You're from the Crossing, the bartender said. I don't remember you.

JOHNSON. You're mistaken: I said that I rode over from the Crossing. (*Turning to The Girl again.*) So you are the Girl?

GIRL. Yes.

RANCE (*Aggressively*). No strangers allowed in this camp. (*A pause.*) (*The Girl and Johnson speak in such low tones that Rance is unable to hear them.*) Perhaps you're off the road. (*A pause.*) (*The Girl and Johnson are still talking.*) (*Sneeringly.*) Men often get mixed up when they're visiting Nina Micheltoreña on the back trail.

GIRL. Rance!

JOHNSON (*Sharply to Rance*). I merely stopped in to rest my horse — and perhaps try a game of — (*coming to the table*) er — poker. (*Picking up a pack of cards.*)

GIRL. Nick, bring in his saddle.

(*As Nick goes for the saddle, Rance rises, annoyed.*)

RANCE. A game, eh? I haven't heard your name, young man.

GIRL (*Laughs*). Oh! Names out here!

JOHNSON. My name's Johnson. (*Throwing down the cards.*)

GIRL (*Cynically*). Is — how much?

JOHNSON. Of Sacramento.

GIRL. Of — how much? (*Coming down to Johnson and shaking hands — not believing a word he says.*) I admire to know you, Mr. Johnson, of Sacramento.

JOHNSON. Thank you.

RANCE (*Angrily*). Say, Minnie, — I —

GIRL (*Aside to Rance, lightly*). Oh, — set down. (*Turning to Johnson as Rance indignantly sits on the end of the faro table.*) Say, do you know what I think of you? I think you staked out a claim in a etiquette book. So you *think* you can play poker?

JOHNSON. That's my conviction.

GIRL. Out of every fifty men who *think* they can play, one ain't mistaken.

JOHNSON (*Following The Girl to the bar*). You may be right.

GIRL. Say, try a cigar.

JOHNSON. Thank you.

GIRL. Best in the house — my compliments. (*She lights a match.*)

JOHNSON. Thank you — you're very kind. (*In a lower tone.*) So you remember me?

GIRL. If you remember me.

RANCE (*Muttering to himself, glancing over his shoulder*). What the devil are they talking about, anyway?

JOHNSON. I met you on the road to Monterey —

GIRL. Goin' an' comin'. You passed me up a bunch of wild syringa over the wheel. You asked me to go a-berryin', but I didn't see it.

JOHNSON. I noticed that.

GIRL. And when you went away, you said — (*embarrassed*) Oh, I dunno . . .

JOHNSON. Yes, you do — yes, you do. I said: "I'll think of you all the time!" Well, I've thought of you ever since.

GIRL. Ha! Somehow I kinder thought you might drop in, but as you didn't . . . of course (*with a sense of propriety*) it wasn't my place to remember you — first.

JOHNSON. But I didn't know where you lived . . . I —

GIRL (*Confidentially*). I got a special bottle here. Best in the house. Will you?

JOHNSON. Why —

GIRL (*Gets a bottle and a glass*). My compliments.

JOHNSON. You are *very* kind. Thanks.

(*Rance rises and, going up to the bar, proceeds to dash the glass to the floor as Mr. Johnson is about to take it.*)

RANCE (*Livid*). Look here, Mr. Johnson: your ways are offensive to me — damned offensive. My name's Rance — Jack Rance. Your business here — your business! (*Calling.*) Boys! Boys! Come in! (*Trinidad, Handsome, Sonora and Happy come in.*) There's a man here who won't explain his business — he —

SONORA, TRINIDAD, HAPPY, HANDSOME (*At the same time*). What? Won't he? Oh, we'll see! Guess we'll make him.

GIRL. Wait a minute. I know him.

THE BOYS (*As one man*). Eh?

GIRL (*To Rance*). Yes, I didn't tell you, but I know him.

RANCE (*To himself*). The Sacramento shrimp, by God!

GIRL (*Comes from behind the bar*). Boys: I vouch to Cloudy for Mr. Johnson.

(*All the men except Rance salute Johnson, who makes a sweeping gesture.*)

JOHNSON. Boys . . .

THE BOYS. Hello, Johnson.

SONORA. Boys: Rance ain't runnin' the Polka yet.

(*A waltz is played as Nick enters.*)

NICK (*To The Girl*). The boys from the Ridge invites you to dance with them.

JOHNSON. May I have the honor of a waltz?

(*Trinidad, Sonora and Handsome are overcome by the manners of Johnson.*)

NICK. Moses! (*Retreats to the dance-hall.*)

GIRL. Me waltz? Me? Ha! Oh, I can't waltz. Ha! — but I can polky.

JOHNSON. Then may I have the pleasure of the next polka?

SONORA (*To the boys*). He's too flip.

GIRL. Oh, I dunno. Makes me feel kind o' foolish, — you know — kind o' retirin' like a elk in summer.

JOHNSON (*Amused*). Yes, they *are* retiring.

GIRL (*Unconsciously wipes her hands on her dress*). Well . . . I don't like everybody's hand on the back of my waist; but somehow — (*She looks at Rance recklessly. Johnson offers her his arm. Unused to this formality, she looks at his proffered arm two or three times, half ashamed, then she looks at the boys, who stand watching her with twinkling eyes.*) Oh, Lord, must I? (*Then making up her mind.*) Oh, come along.

JOHNSON. Thanks.

GIRL (*Dances off with Johnson, calling to the Fiddler*). A polky! (*In the dance-hall they are acclaimed by loud whoops.*)

SONORA (*To Rance*). Chink!

RANCE. Ha! Ha! Cleaned out, by God! by a high-toned, fine-haired dog named Johnson. Well, I'll be damned! (*As Nick comes in with a saddle.*) What's that?

NICK. Johnson's saddle.

RANCE (*Knocking the saddle out of Nick's hands*). You know, Nick — I've got a great notion to walk out of this door, and —

NICK (*Scenting the loss of a good customer*). Aw, she's only kiddin' him. (*He removes the saddle to a place of safety.*)

ASHBY (*Outside*). Boys!

RANCE. What's that?

TRINIDAD. Why, that's —

NICK. That's Ashby.

ASHBY (*Outside*). Come on — you!

TRINIDAD. What's the matter?

THE DEPUTY SHERIFF (*Is heard to call*). Run him in.

(*He enters with Ashby and several men. They bring in José Castro. Billy Jackrabbit follows them on.*)

(*Castro is an oily, greasy, unwashed Mexican greaser of a low type. His clothing is partly Mexican. He is yellow, sullen, wiry, hard-faced, tricky and shifty-eyed. He has the curved legs of a man who lives on a broncho.*)

(*Ashby is completely transformed. His hat is on the back of his head, his hair is ruffled and falls over his forehead in straggling locks; his coat is thrown open and his face is savage and pitiless.*)

ASHBY. The greaser in the trail.

RANCE (*Takes Castro by the hair, throwing him over and forcing his head back*). Here, you — give us a look at your face.

ASHBY. Nick, come — give us a drink. (*Going to the bar.*)

RANCE. Tie him up.

(*Billy Jackrabbit goes to the fireplace, gets the lariat as Rance pushes Castro to the floor.*)

ASHBY (*Inviting all to drink*). Come on, boys.

(*The boys, with the exception of Sonora, join Ashby at the bar.*)

CASTRO (*Seeing Johnson's saddle on the floor — to himself*). Ramerrez' . . . (*He pauses — overcome.*) Taken . . .

ASHBY (*To Sonora, who is watching The Girl dance*). Say, my friend, don't you drink?

SONORA. Oh, occasionally. (*He joins Ashby.*)

RANCE (*Looking off at The Girl*). Polkying!

(*Nick lets down the pelts which screen off the dance-hall, as Billy Jackrabbit and the Deputy throw Castro into a chair. Castro, who has caught a glimpse of Johnson dancing with The Girl, is relieved.*)

ASHBY (*Having tasted his drink — going to Castro*). Come now, tell us what your name is.

HAPPY. You bet!

ASHBY. Speak up! Who are you?

SONORA *and* HANDSOME. Speak up! What's your name?

(*Rance, eying Castro, sits at the faro table, his legs crossed.*)

CASTRO. José Castro, ex-padroña of the bull-fights.

RANCE. But the bull-fights are at Monterey. Why do you come to this place?

CASTRO. To tell the Señor Sheriff I know where ees — Ramerrez.

(*The men would surround Castro to question him, but Rance motions to them to stand back.*)

RANCE. You lie! (*Raises his hand for silence.*)

CASTRO. Nay, plaanty Mexican vaquero — my friends Peralta — Vellejos — all weeth Ramerrez — so I know where ees.

RANCE (*Pointing at him quickly to take him off his guard*). You're one of his men yourself!

CASTRO (*Quickly with childlike innocence*). No — no . . .

RANCE (*Pointing to Ashby*). That's Ashby — the man that pays out that reward you've heard of. Where is Ramerrez' camp?

CASTRO. Come weeth me one mile, and, by the soul of my mother, — the blessed Maria Saltaja, — we weel put a knife into hees back.

RANCE. One mile, eh?

SONORA. If I thought . . .

RANCE. Where is this trail?

CASTRO. Up the Madroña Canyada.

A MAN (*Entering from the dance-hall*). Hello, boys! What's —

ALL (*Warning the new-comer to silence*). Sh! Git! Git out! Shut up! Git!

RANCE. Go on.

CASTRO. Ramerrez can be taken, if many men come weeth me . . . forty minute there and back —

RANCE. What do you think?

ASHBY. Curious . . . This is the second warning we have had from here.

RANCE (*To Ashby*). This Nina Micheltoreña's letter to you? You say she is coming here to-night? (*As Ashby nods.*) Looks as though he was known around here.

ASHBY. All the same, I wouldn't go.

SONORA. What! Risk losin' him?

RANCE. Boys, we'll take the chance. (*He rises.*)

NICK. Want a drink? (*He goes up to the bar, clearing off the bottles and glasses.*)

(*Ashby has gone out. The men put on their overcoats, hats, etc., and prepare to leave in search of the road-agent. They exclaim:* "Ready, Sheriff!" "Come on, boys!" "Come on, Happy!" "Careful, boys!" etc.)

RANCE (*At the open door, sniffing the air*). I don't like the smell of the air. Snow. (*He goes out.*)

DEPUTY. Load up.

TRINIDAD. Get out the horses.

HAPPY. We'll git this road-agent.

SONORA (*As he passes Castro*). Come on, you oily, garlic-eating, red-peppery, dog-trottin' sun-baked son of a skunk!

(*The men hasten off, followed by Billy Jackrabbit, leaving Castro, Nick and the Deputy in the barroom.*)

DEPUTY. Come on, you!

CASTRO (*His teeth chattering*). One dreenk — I freeze —

DEPUTY. Give him a drink, Nick. Watch him. (*He goes out.*)

NICK (*Contemptuously*). What'll you have?

CASTRO (*Rises*). Geeve me — (*loudly, suddenly facing the dance-hall and speaking so that his voice may be heard by Johnson*) aguardiente.

NICK. Set down!

(*Castro, looking off, seeing that Johnson has seen him, sits, as Johnson hastens on from the dance-hall.*)

JOHNSON. So — you did bring my saddle in, eh, Nick?

CASTRO (*In a low voice*). Ramerrez! . . . Master . . .

JOHNSON. Don't talk . . .

CASTRO. I let them take me, according to your beeding.

JOHNSON (*Looking toward Nick*). Careful, José . . . (*Puts the saddle on the table.*)

NICK (*Coming down with a drink for José, who bolts it*). Here.

VOICES (*From the dance-hall*). Nick! Nick!

NICK. Oh — the Ridge boys goin'. (*Goes back to the bar with the glasses — then speaks to Johnson.*) Say — keep your eye on him a minute, will you?

JOHNSON. Certainly. You tell the Girl you pressed me into service, will you? (*Touches his pistol pocket.*)

NICK. Sure. Say, she's taken an awful fancy to you.

JOHNSON. No!

NICK. Yes. Drop in often — great bar.

JOHNSON. It certainly is. (*Nick hastens off.*) Ha! Ha! Ha! (*To Castro.*) Go on . . .

CASTRO. Bueno! Our men lie in the bushes near, I lead the sheriff far off . . . then I slip away. Queeckly rob thes place now and fly. It is death for you to linger. Ashby see here.

JOHNSON (*Without looking*). Ashby! Wait a minute. (*As Nick sticks in his head to cast a watchful glance at Castro.*) All right, Nick. Yes, everything's all right. (*Nick goes out again as a cachuca is gaily played.*)

CASTRO. By to-morrow twilight, you must be safe in your rancho.

JOHNSON. No — we'll raid on.

CASTRO. An hundred men on your track —

JOHNSON. One minute's start of the devil does me, José.

CASTRO. I fear the woman, Nina Micheltoreña . . . teeribly I fear. Close at hand . . . knowing all . . . fresh from your four weeks' quarrel with her . . . still loving you.

JOHNSON. Loving me? Oh, no. Like you, Nina loved the spoils, not me. No, I raid on.

SONORA (*heard outside*). Bring along the greaser, Dep.

(*The boys are heard off stage and the glare of torches is seen through the windows.*)

DEPUTY (*Heard outside*). All right.

CASTRO (*To Johnson*). We start. Queeckly geeve the signal.

GIRL (*Calling in the dance-hall*). Good-night, boys — good-night. (*The music ends*). Remember me to the Ridge.

VOICES OF THE RIDGE BOYS (*Off stage*). You bet! So long! Whoop! Whooppee!

CASTRO. All gone. Only the woman there — and her servant. . . . . Antonio waits your signal.

DEPUTY (*Entering*). Come on.

CASTRO. Adios.

JOHNSON. Adios.

DEPUTY. Come on.

(*He drags Castro off. We hear the boys moving away. Johnson takes up his saddle.*)

GIRL (*Entering from the dance-hall*). Nick, you can put the lights out. (*Nick puts out the candle over the table.*) Put the lights out here, too. Oh, you ain't goin'?

JOHNSON. Not yet, no, but . . .

GIRL. I'm glad of that. Don't it feel funny here? It's kind of creepy. I suppose that's because I never remember seeing the bar so empty before. (*Putting a chair in place.*)

NICK (*Putting out the candle on the mantelpiece*). I'm goin' to close the shutters. (*He closes the shutters.*)

GIRL (*Crossing to the table*). What for — so early?

NICK (*In a half whisper*). Well, you see, the boys is out huntin' Ramerrez — and they's too much money here.

GIRL. Oh, all right. Cash in. Don't put the head on the keg. I ain't cashed in m'self yet.

NICK (*Rolling out the keg*). Say, Min . . .

GIRL. Huh?

NICK (*Looking uneasily at the keg, and then darting a glance towards Johnson*). Know anything about — him?

GIRL. Oh, sure.

NICK. All right, eh?

GIRL. Yes. (*Nick blows out the lights at the door, and goes into the empty dance-hall.*) Well, Mr. Johnson: it seems to be us a-keepin' house here to-night, don't it?

JOHNSON. Strange how things come about. . . . Strange to be looking everywhere for you, and to find you at last at the Polka. (*Sitting on the table.*)

GIRL. Anything wrong with the Polka?

JOHNSON. Well, it's hardly the place for a young woman like you.

GIRL. How so?

JOHNSON. It's rather unprotected, and —

GIRL. Oh, pshaw! I said to Ashby only to-night: "I bet if a road-agent come in here, I could offer him a drink an' he'd treat me like a perfect lady." Say, won't you take something? (*Going back of the bar for a bottle.*)

JOHNSON. No, thank you. I'd like to ask you a question.

GIRL. I know what it is — every stranger asks it, but I didn't think *you* would. It's this: am I decent? Yep, I am — you bet!

JOHNSON. Oh, Girl: I'm not blind — that was not the question.

GIRL (*Leaning over the bar, looking at him*). Dear me suz!

JOHNSON. What I meant to say was this: I am sorry to find you here almost at the mercy of the passer-by . . . where a man may come, may drink, may rob you if he will; and where I daresay more than one has even laid claim to a kiss.

GIRL. They's a good many people claimin' things they never git. (*She is putting her money in a cigar-box.*) I've got my first kiss to give.

JOHNSON (*Studying her*). You're clever. Been here long?

GIRL. Yep.

JOHNSON. Live in the Polka?

GIRL. Nop.

JOHNSON. Where do you live?

GIRL. Cabin up the mountain a little ways.

JOHNSON. You're worth something better than this.

GIRL. What's better'n this? I ain't boastin', but if keepin' this saloon don't give me a sort of position round here, I dunno what does. Ha! Look here: say, you ain't one of them exhorters, are you, from the missionaries' camp?

JOHNSON. My profession has its faults, but I am not an exhorter.

GIRL. You know I can't figger out jest exactly what you are.

JOHNSON. Try.

GIRL (*Getting a chair from behind the poker table*). Well — you ain't one of us.

JOHNSON. No?

GIRL. Oh, I can tell — I can spot my man every time. I tell you, keepin' saloon is a great educator. (*Sitting.*) I dunno but what it's a good way to bring up girls. They git to know things. Now, I'd trust you.

JOHNSON. You would trust me?

GIRL. Notice I danced with you to-night?

JOHNSON. Yes.

GIRL. I seen from the first you was the real article.

JOHNSON. I beg pardon.

GIRL. Why, that was a compliment I handed to you.

JOHNSON. Oh . . .

GIRL (*Confidentially*). Your kind don't prevail much here . . . I can tell — I got what you call a quick eye.

JOHNSON. I'm afraid that men like me — prevail, as you say, almost everywhere.

GIRL. Go on! What are you giving me? Of course they don't. Ha! Before I went on that trip to Monterey, I thought Rance here was the genu*ine* thing in a gent — but

the minute I kind o' glanced over you on the road — I — I seen he wasn't. Say — take your whiskey — and water. (*She rises.*)

JOHNSON. No.

GIRL (*Calling*). Nick? (*Changing her mind.*) No, I'll help you to a drink myself.

JOHNSON. No, thank you.

GIRL (*Leaning against the bar, studying him*). Say, I've got you figgered out: you're awful good, or awful bad. . . .

JOHNSON (*Half amused*). Now what do you mean by that?

GIRL. Well, so good that you're a teetotaler — or so bad that you're tired of life an' whiskey.

JOHNSON (*Rising and going up to her*). On the contrary, although I'm not good — I've lived, and I've liked life pretty well, and I am not tired of it: it's been bully! (*Leaning on the bar.*) So have you liked it, Girl, only you haven't lived — you haven't lived. (*He attempts to take The Girl's hand, but she retreats.*) Not with *your* nature. You see, I've got a quick eye, too.

(*Nick enters slowly and prepares to seat himself in a chair back of the poker table.*)

GIRL. Nick, git! (*Nick casts an inquisitive glance at the pair and hastens out.*) Say, what do you mean by — I haven't lived?

JOHNSON (*Insinuatingly, half under his breath*). Oh, you know.

GIRL. No, I don't.

JOHNSON. Yes, you do.

GIRL. Well, say it's an even chance I do and an even chance I don't.

JOHNSON (*In a low voice*). I mean life for all it's worth . . . to the utmost . . . to the last drop in the cup . . . so that it atones for what's gone before, or may come after.

GIRL. No, I don't believe I do know what you mean by them words. Is it a — (*She crosses to the poker table and sits down on her revolver which is in her pocket. She rises hastily.*) Oh, Lord! Excuse me — I set on my gun. (*Impulsively.*) I can't pass you on the road. I take your dust. Look here: I'm goin' to make you an offer.

JOHNSON. An offer?

GIRL. It's this: if ever you need to be staked —

JOHNSON. Eh?

GIRL. Which of course you don't, — name your price — jest for the style I'll git from you an' the deportment.

JOHNSON. Deportment? Me?

NICK (*Re-entering*). Oh, er — I'd like to say —

GIRL (*Annoyed*). Oh!

(*Nick goes off hurriedly.*)

JOHNSON. Well, I never heard before that my society was so desirable. Apart from the financial aspect of the matter — I —

GIRL (*Admiringly, half to herself*). Ain't that great? Ain't that great? Oh, you got to let me stand treat. (*Calls.*) Nick? (*She slips down from the table where she has been seated.*)

JOHNSON. No, really. Say, Girl: you're like finding some new kind of flower.

GIRL. You know the reason I made you that offer is — we're kind of rough up here, but we're reaching out. Now, I take it that what we're all put on this earth for — every one of us — is to rise ourselves up in the world — to reach out.

JOHNSON (*With a change of manner*). That's true — that's true. I venture to say there isn't a man who hasn't thought seriously about that. I have. If only a man knew how to reach out for something he hardly dare even hope for. It's like trying to catch the star shining just ahead.

GIRL. That's the cheese. You've struck it.

(*Nick enters.*)

NICK. I *have* been a-tryin' to say —

GIRL. What *is* it, Nick?

NICK. I jest seen an ugly lookin' greaser outside a winder.

GIRL (*Going up to the door*). A greaser? Let me look.

JOHNSON (*Who knows that it is his man, awaiting the signal — speaking with an air of authority*). I wouldn't.

GIRL. Why not?

NICK. I'll bolt all the winders. (*He goes off.*)

(*A whistle is heard outside. Johnson recognizes the signal.*)

GIRL. Don't that sound horrid? (*Getting behind the counter.*) I'm awful glad you're here. Nick's so nervous. He knows what a lot of money I've got. Why, there's a little fortune right in that keg.

JOHNSON (*Crossing over to the keg and looking at it*). In that keg?

GIRL. The boys sleep round it nights.

JOHNSON. But when they're gone — isn't that a careless place to leave it?

GIRL (*Coming down to the keg*). Oh, they'd have to kill me before they got it.

JOHNSON. I see — it's *your* money.

GIRL. No, it belongs to the boys.

JOHNSON. Oh, that's different. Now, I wouldn't risk my life for that.

GIRL (*Putting the bags of gold-dust in the keg, and closing the keg and standing with her foot on it*). Oh, yes, you would — yes, you would — if you seen how hard they got it. When I think of it — I — I nearly cry. You know there's something awful pretty in the way the boys hold out before they strike it — awful pretty — in the face of rocks and clay and alkali. Oh, Lord, what a life it is, anyway! Why, they eat dirt — an' they sleep dirt, an' they breathe dirt till their backs are bent, their hands twisted, their souls warped; they're all wind-swept an' blear-eyed — an' some of 'em just lie down in their own sweat beside the sluices, an' they don't never rise again. I've seen 'em there. I got some money of old Brownie's. (*Pointing to the keg.*) He was lyin' out in the sun on a pile of clay two weeks ago an' I guess the only clean thing about him was his soul — an' he was quittin' — quittin' right there on the clay — an' quittin' hard. . . . (*Remembering the scene with horror.*) Oh, he died — jest like a dog . . . you wanted to shoot him to help him along quicker. Before he went, he sez: "Girl, give it to my old woman," and he — left. She'll git it. (*Slight pause.*) An' that's what aches you. They ain't one of these men working for themselves alone. The Almighty never put it in no man's heart to make a beast or pack-horse of himself — except for some woman, or some

child. Ain't it wonderful? Ain't it wonderful, that instinct, ain't it? — What a man'll do when it comes to a woman. Ain't it wonderful? Yep, the boys use me as a — ha — sort of lady bank. (*She wipes her eyes.*) You bet I'll drop down dead before any one'll get a dollar of theirs outer the Polka!

JOHNSON (*After a short pause*). That's right. (*Taking The Girl's hand.*) I'm with you. I'd like to see any one get *that.* (*They shake hands over the keg — not heroically, but very simply.*) Girl, you make me wish I could talk more with you, but I can't. By daybreak I must be a long way off. I'm sorry. I should have liked to call at your cabin.

GIRL (*Wistfully*). Must you be movin' — so — soon?

JOHNSON. I'm only waiting till the posse gets back and you're safe. (*Listening.*) There. . . . They're coming now. . . .

GIRL. I'm awful sorry you got to go. I was goin' to say: (*rolling the keg up stage, she takes a lantern off the bar and sets it on the keg*) if you didn't have to go so soon, I'd like to have you come up to the cabin to-night, and we would talk of reaching out up there. You see, the boys will come back here. . . . . We close the Polka at one — any time after that.

JOHNSON. I — I should ride on now — but — I'll come.

GIRL. Oh, good! (*Giving the lantern to Johnson.*) You can use this lantern. It's the straight trail up — you can't miss it. Say, don't expect too much of me — I've only had thirty-two dollars' worth of education. (*Her voice breaks, her eyes fill with tears.*) P'raps if I'd had more — why, you can't tell what I might have been. Say, that's a turrible thought, ain't it? What we — might have been? And I know it when I look at you.

JOHNSON (*Touched*). God knows it is! What we might have been — and *I* know it when I look at *you*, Girl — I know it — when I look at you.

GIRL (*Wipes away a tear*). You bet! (*Suddenly collapses, burying her face on her arm on the bar, sobbing, speaking through her tears.*) Oh, 'tain't no use — I'm ignorant — I don't know nothin' and I never knowed it till to-night. The boys always

told me I knowed so much — but they're such damned liars.

JOHNSON (*Comes up and leans on the bar. Earnestly, with a suggestion of tears in his voice*). Don't you care — you're all right, Girl — you're all right. Your heart's all right — that's the main thing. As for your looks, — to me you've got the face of an angel. I — I'll just take a glance at my horse. (*He takes up his saddle, crosses to the door, then turns back. To himself.*) Johnson, what the devil's the matter with you? (*He goes out hastily, carrying the lantern and slamming the door behind him.*)

(*The Girl stands immovable for a moment, then calls suddenly.*)

GIRL. Nick! Nick! (*Nick enters quickly. She turns her face away, wiping off a tear.*) You run over to the Palmetter rest'rant an' tell 'em to send me up two charlotte rusks an' a lemming turnover — jest as quick as they can — right up to the cabin for supper. (*Nick goes off.*) Ha! (*She crosses to the poker table and sits on the edge, the light above shining down on her face. Strumming on a guitar and mandolin is heard as though the musicians were tuning up for the boys.*) He says . . . He says . . . (*sentimentally*) I have the face of an angel. (*A little pause, then turning her face away.*) Oh, hell!

CURTAIN

ACT II

"Two people who came from nothing."

SCENE: *The home of The Girl on Cloudy Mountain. One o'clock in the morning.*

The interior of the cabin has but one room, square, and made of logs. It is half papered as though the owner had bought wall-paper in camp and the supply had given out.

There is but one door, and that leads to the trail. This door, in the centre at back, is double boarded and fastened by a heavy bar. It opens on a rough vestibule, built to keep out the storms and cold.

The windows, at which are calico curtains, are provided with heavy wooden shutters and bars. The barred door and windows give an air of security to the room as though it could be made into a little fortress.

The furniture is rather primitive. A bed, screened off by calico curtains, stands at the right side of the room. Below the bed is a bureau covered by a Navajo blanket on which a few crude toilet articles are set about. A cheap black framed mirror, decorated with strings of Indian beads and white cambric roses, hangs over the bureau. A wash-stand, backed by a "splasher" of white oil-cloth, is near the bed. On the opposite side of the room, a pine wardrobe, rudely painted by a miner, contains most of The Girl's clothing. A sunbonnet and shawl hang on a peg driven into the side of the wardrobe. A gay hat-box from Monterey and a small basket grace the top of the wardrobe. A calico curtain covers a few garments hanging on pegs. In an angle, formed by a fireplace, is a row of shelves, holding tin cups, Indian baskets, two plates, a tin can, knives, forks and spoons. A rocking-chair, made of a barrel, set on rockers and dyed with blueing, is embellished with calico cushions and an antimacassar. There are four other chairs in the room. A pine table is almost in the centre of the room. It is covered with a red cloth and over this a white tablecloth. Three dishes are on the table; one contains the charlotte "rusks", one the "lemming" turnover, and the other holds biscuit and chipped beef. A sugar bowl with brown sugar is placed in the centre of the table. A fire burns in a fireplace which has an iron hood, a big back log and a smaller log in front. A pile of wood lies on the floor close at hand. A kettle hangs over the fire and a coffee pot is set on a log. A few china ornaments, a bunch of winter berries stuck in a glass jar, and a bottle of whiskey with two glasses, are on the mantel. A box is nailed on the wall to form a bookshelf for a few well-worn old books. A wolf skin and moccasins are in front of the bureau, a large bear-skin rug is on the floor opposite the fireplace. A few pictures taken from "Godey's Lady's Book", one or two old prints, and a large sombrero hat hang on the wall. A horseshoe over the door and the head of a small antelope, an old pair of snowshoes over the window and a lady's night-dress on a peg, complete the decora-

tions in the lower part of the room. Above is a loft reached by a ladder which is swung up out of the way. By standing on a chair and reaching up, the ladder may be pulled down to the floor. Some old trunks and a few little boxes are neatly piled on the floor of the loft. Blankets screen off one end of the attic. A lamp hangs from an arm (swinging from the loft above) and shines down on the table. The winter is now beginning, and, although there is no evidence of snow in the early part of the act, the cabin windows are heavily frosted. When the curtain rises, the scene is lighted by the lamps and the glow from the fireplace. The moon is shining brightly through the window.

At the rise of the curtain, Wowkle, a squaw, is seated on the floor, singing, her papoose on her back. She is dressed in a long cloth skirt, a short red calico skirt hanging over it. She wears moccasins. Her hair is parted in the middle and drawn into two tight little blue-black braids, crossed in the back, low in the neck. She wears a number of glass bead necklaces and small silver hoops in her ears. She is young, beady-eyed, sweet-faced, and rather plump, — the lax, uncorseted, voluptuous type of squaw. She is perfectly good-natured, at times quizzical, but utterly unreliable and without any ideas of morality.

(*Billy Jackrabbit enters.*)

BILLY JACKRABBIT. Ugh!

WOWKLE. Ugh! (*As Billy Jackrabbit comes towards Wowkle, he sees the food on the table, looks at it greedily, picks up a plate and is about to stick his finger into the contents.*) Charlotte rusk — Palmetto rest'rant. Not take.

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Putting the plate back on the table*). H'm . . . H'm . . . Me honest.

WOWKLE. Huh!

(*Billy stoops and picks up a piece of paper to which some of the food [which has been wrapped in it] still clings. He rubs his fingers over the paper and licks them during the following conversation.*)

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Grunting, sitting down beside Wowkle*). Send me up from Polka — say p'raps me marry you. . . . Huh?

WOWKLE (*Impassively*). Me don't know.
(*Pause.*)

BILLY JACKRABBIT. Me don't know. (*A slight pause. They are sitting side by side on the floor — unlike lovers — just two Indians.*) Me marry you, how much me got give fatha — Huh?

WOWKLE (*Indifferently with a black look*). Huh! Me don't know.

BILLY JACKRABBIT. Me don't know. (*Pause.*) Me give fatha four dolla — (*indicating with his fingers — licking one as he speaks*) — and one blanket.

WOWKLE. Betta me keep um blanket for baby.

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Grunts*). Me give fatha three dolla and baby.

WOWKLE. We keep um baby.

BILLY JACKRABBIT. Tawakawa.
(*Tearing off a piece of the sticky paper and handing it to Wowkle.*)

WOWKLE. Toanimbutuc. (*Billy offers to let the baby lick the paper, but Wowkle draws the child away.*) Aie! Missionary woman at Battla Ridge him say marry first — then baby.

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Who has licked the paper clean, and is now smoking his pipe*). Huh!

WOWKLE. Me say baby first . . . him say all right, but marry — get plenty bead.

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Eying her beads and giving his pipe to Wowkle who takes a puff*). You sing hymn for get those bead?

WOWKLE. Me sing — (*Singing softly but in a fairly high pitched voice with a slight nasal quality of tone.*)

"My days are as um grass —"

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Recognizing the air, gives a grunt and joins in with Wowkle*).

"Or as um faded flowa —
Um wintry winds sweep o'er um plain,
We pe'ish in — um — ow-a —"

(*Taking his pipe from Wowkle.*) By Gar, to-morrow we go missionary — sing like hell — get whiskey. (*Rises.*)

"Pe'ish in um ow-a"

(*He goes up to the door and stands there.*) Al-right — go missionary to-morrow — get marry — huh?

WOWKLE. Billy Jackrabbit: (*she rises*) p'haps me not stay marry with you for long time.

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Unimpressed*). Huh! How long — seven monse?

WOWKLE. Six monse.

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Taking a red handkerchief from his pocket, and sticking it between the papoose and the board*). Um . . . for baby. (*Nudging Wowkle with his elbow.*) You come soon?

WOWKLE. Girl eat suppa first — me come.

BILLY JACKRABBIT (*Nudging her again — then going into the vestibule*). Huh! Girl come.

(*The Girl appears outside the door, holding up a lantern. There is a certain suppressed excitement in her manner as she enters, yet she shows a new thoughtfulness and speaks quietly. She looks about as though to see what effect this little cabin will have on Johnson.*)

GIRL. Turn up the lamps — quick. (*She hangs her lantern on the outer door. Wowkle turns up the lamp on the table.*) Hello, Jackrabbit: fixed it?

BILLY JACKRABBIT. Me fix.

GIRL (*Who is seated*). That's good. Now git! (*Rising — going to the table.*) Wowkle: it's for two to-night.

WOWKLE. Ugh!

GIRL. Yep.

WOWKLE. Come anotha? Neva before come anotha.

GIRL. Never you mind. He's coming — he's coming: Pick up the room. What time is it, Wowkle? (*She has hung up her coat and now shakes Wowkle. Wowkle gets plates, cups, etc.*) Wowkle, what did you do with them red roses?

WOWKLE. Ugh.

(*Pointing to the bureau.*)

GIRL. Good. (*She finds the roses and arranges them in her hair.*) No offense — but I want you to put your best foot forward (*takes a pistol out of her pocket and puts it on the lower end of the bureau*) when you're waitin' on table to-night. This here comp'ny of mine is a man of idees. Oh, he knows everything — sort of a damn-me style. Wowkle, how's the papoose? Father really proposed to you?

WOWKLE. Yep — get marry.

GIRL (*Taking a ribbon from a drawer*). Here: you can have that to fix the baby up for the weddin'. Hurry, Wowklé. I'm going to put them on, (*she sits on the floor and puts on a pair of new slippers which she has taken from the bottom drawer*) — if I can git 'em on. Remember what fun I made of you when you took up with Billy Jackrabbit? "What for?" sez I. Well, perhaps you was right. Perhaps it's nice to have some one you really care for — who really belongs to you. Perhaps there ain't so much in the saloon business for a woman, after all — an' you don't know what livin' really is. Ah, Wowkle: it's nice to have some one you can talk to, some one you can turn your heart inside out to — (*As a knock sounds on the window.*) Oh, Lord! here he is, Wowkle!

(*She tries to conceal herself behind the foot of the bed — one slipper in her hand. Sid opens the window and peers in.*)

WOWKLE. Ugh!

GIRL (*Disgusted at seeing Sid*). What are you doin' here, you Sidney Duck? You git!

SID. Beg pardon, Miss. I know men ain't allowed up here.

GIRL. No.

SID. But I'm in grite trouble. The boys are 'ot. They missed that road-agent, Ramerrez — and now they're tiking it out on me. (*Sniffs.*) If you'd only speak a word for me, Miss.

GIRL. No! Wowkle, shut the winder.

SID (*Pleading*). Ow, don't be 'ard on me.

GIRL. Now, look here: they's one kind of men (*gesticulating with a slipper*) I can't stand — a cheat and a thief, an' you're it. You're no better than that road-agent Ramerrez. (*Put-*

ting on the other slipper.) Wowkle, close the winder. Close the winder.

SID. Public 'ouse jide!

(*He slams the window and disappears.*)

GIRL. I got 'em on! (*Rising with difficulty.*) Say, Wowkle: do you think he'll like 'em? How do they look? Gosh! They're tight. Say, Wowkle: I'm going the whole hog. (*She has taken a lace shawl from the bureau drawer and puts it on; then she sprinkles some perfumery over a large lace handkerchief and starts to draw on a pair of one-button gloves.*) Look here, Wowkle: does it look like an effort?

WOWKLE (*Understanding at last*). H'm! Two plate . . .

(*There is a knock on the door. The Girl hastily adjusts her belt, pulls up her stocking and opens the door.*)

JOHNSON (*Surprised*). Hello!

GIRL (*Embarrassed*). Hello, Mr. Johnson . . .

JOHNSON (*Noticing her gloves*). Are you — going out?

GIRL. Yes — no — I don't know. Oh, come on in.

JOHNSON (*Setting his lantern on the table*). Thank you.

(*Attempting to put his arms round her.*)

WOWKLE. Ugh!

(*She shuts the door which Johnson left open.*)

JOHNSON (*Eying Wowkle*). I beg your pardon. I didn't see —

GIRL. You stop jest where you are, Mr. Johnson.

JOHNSON. I — I apologize. But seeing you standing there, and looking into your lovely eyes — well, the temptation to take you in my arms was so great — that I — I took it.

(*Wowkle, blowing out Johnson's lantern, goes into the cupboard with her papoose.*)

THE GIRL. You must be in the habit of taking things, Mr. Johnson. I seen you on the road to Monterey, goin' an' comin' — I seen you once since, and passed a few words with you; but that don't give you no excuse to begin this sort of game. Besides, you might have prospected a bit first, anyway.

JOHNSON. I see how wrong I was. May I take off my coat? (*She does not answer.*) Thank you. (*He lays his coat on a chair.*) What a bully little place you have here — awfully

snug. And I've found you again! Oh, the luck! (*Holding out his hands.*) Friends, Girl?

GIRL (*Withholding her hand*). Are you sorry?

JOHNSON. No, I'm not sorry.

GIRL (*Bashfully — half to herself*). That damn-me style! Well, look here: (*going towards the chair at the table*) down to the saloon to-night, you said you always got what you wanted. Well, of course I've got to admire you for that — I guess women always do admire men for gettin' what they want. But if huggin' me is included, cut it out, Mr. Johnson.

JOHNSON (*Facing her across the table*). That was a lovely day, Girl, on the road to Monterey, wasn't it?

GIRL. Was it? Oh, take a chair an' set down.

JOHNSON. Thanks.

(*But he does not sit.*)

GIRL. Say, look here: I been thinkin' . . . You didn't come to the saloon to see me to-night. What brought you?

JOHNSON. It was Fate.

GIRL. Was it Fate — or — the back trail?

JOHNSON (*Coming to the table and attempting to embrace The Girl*). It was Fate.

GIRL (*Retreating to a corner*). Wowkle: git the coffee. Oh, Lord, take a chair.

(*Starts up to place a chair near the table, but Johnson intercepts her before she can pick up his coat which lies across the back of the chair.*)

JOHNSON. Careful, please! Careful!

GIRL (*Peering at the revolvers in his coat pockets*). How many guns do you carry?

JOHNSON (*Hangs his coat on the peg*). Oh, several — when traveling through the country.

GIRL (*Apprehensively*). Set down.

(*He sits.*)

JOHNSON. Ha! It must be strange, living all alone way up here in the mountain. Isn't it lonely?

GIRL. Lonely? Mountains lonely? Ha! Besides — (*sitting in the barrel rocking-chair*) I got a little pinto, an' I'm all over

the country on him — finest little horse you ever throwed a leg over. If I want to, I can ride right down into the summer at the foothills, with miles of Injun pinks just a-laffin' — an' tiger lilies as mad as blazes. There's a river there, too — the Injuns call it a "water road" — an' I can git on that an' drift an' drift, an' I smell the wild syringa on the banks — M'm! And if I git tired o' that, I can turn my horse up grade an' gallop right into the winter an' the lonely pines an' firs a-whisperin' an' a-sighin'. Oh, my mountains! My beautiful peaks! My Sierras! God's in the air here, sure. You can see Him layin' peaceful hands on the mountain tops. He seems so near, you want to let your soul go right on up.

JOHNSON (*Who has been listening, nodding his head slightly in appreciation*). When you die, you won't have far to go, Girl.

GIRL (*After a pause*). Wowkle, git the coffee.

(*The Girl and Johnson sit at the table. Wowkle pours the coffee into the cups, and sets the pot back in the fireplace.*)

JOHNSON. But when it's cold up here — very cold and it snows?

GIRL. Oh, the boys come up an' dig me out of my front door — ha — like — a — (*Spearing a biscuit with her fork.*)

JOHNSON. Little rabbit, eh?

GIRL. I git dug out nearly every day when the mines is shet down an' the Academy opens.

JOHNSON (*In surprise*). Academy? Here? Who teaches in your Academy?

GIRL. Me. I'm her. I'm teacher.

JOHNSON. You teach? Oh —

GIRL. Yep, I learn m'self — (*putting sugar in Johnson's coffee*) an' the boys at the same time. But, of course, Academy's suspended when they's a blizzard on —

JOHNSON (*Seeing that she is continuing to put sugar in his coffee*). Hold on . . . hold on . . .

GIRL. — 'Cause no girl could git down the mountain then.

JOHNSON. Is it so very severe here when there's a blizzard on?

GIRL. Oh, Lordy! They come in a minute — all of a sudden — and you don't know where you are. It's awful! (*Offering a dish with an air of pride.*) Charlotte Rusks!

JOHNSON (*Surprised*). No!

GIRL. And lemming turnovers!

JOHNSON. Well!

GIRL. Will you have one?

JOHNSON. You bet! Thank you. Let me send you some little souvenir of to-night — something you'd love to read in your course of teaching at the Academy. What have you been reading lately?

GIRL. Oh, it's an awful funny book, about a couple. He was a classic an' his name was Dant.

JOHNSON. He was a classic, and his name was Dant. Oh, Dante! Yes, I know. And did you find it funny? Dante funny?

GIRL. I roared. You see, he loves a lady —

(*Rising to get the book.*)

JOHNSON. Beatrice —

GIRL. How?

JOHNSON. Go on.

GIRL. He loves a lady. It made me think of it what you said down to the saloon to-night about livin' so you didn't care what come after. Well, he made up his mind — this Dant — Dantee — that one hour of happiness with her was worth the whole da — (*correcting herself*) outfit that come after. He was willin' to sell out his chances for sixty minutes with her. Well, I jest put the book down and hollered!

JOHNSON. Of course you did. All the same, you knew he was right.

GIRL. I didn't.

(*Putting the book back on the shelf.*)

JOHNSON. You did.

GIRL. Didn't.

JOHNSON. You did.

GIRL. Didn't.

JOHNSON. You know he was right!

GIRL. I don't.

JOHNSON. Yes, you do. You do.

GIRL. I don't. That a feller could so wind himself up as to

say: (*sitting at the table*) "Jest give me one hour of your sassiety — time ain't nothin' — nothin' ain't nothin' — only to be a da — darn fool over you." Ain't it funny to feel like that? Yet I suppose there are folks who feel like that; folks that love into the grave, and into death — and after. Golly! It jests lifts you right up by your boot-straps to think of it, don't it?

JOHNSON (*Looks at her intently, not smiling. One can see that he is fascinated*). It does have that effect.

GIRL. Yet p'raps he was ahead of the game. Ha — I dunno. Oh, say, I just love this conversation with you. I love to hear you talk. You give me idees. Wowkle, bring the candle. (*Wowkle gives the candle to Johnson.*) Say, look here: one of your real Havanas.

(*Wowkle knows now that Johnson is the chosen man. She eyes him with great curiosity.*)

JOHNSON. No, I —

GIRL (*Handing him the cigar*). Go on.

JOHNSON (*Looking her through and through, his eyes half closed*). Thank you. How I would love to know you, Girl!

GIRL. You do know me.

JOHNSON (*Lights his cigar*). Not well enough.

GIRL. What's your drift?

JOHNSON. To know you as Dante knew the lady. To say: "One hour for me — one hour — worth the world" . . .

GIRL. He didn't git it, Mr. Johnson.

(*Drinking her coffee.*)

JOHNSON. All the same, there are women we can die for . . .

GIRL. How many times have you died?

JOHNSON (*Lays the cigar down on the table*). That day on the road to Monterey, I said: "Just that one woman for me." (*Taking The Girl's hand.*) I wanted to kiss you then.

(*She rises, pulls her hand away and starts to clear the table.*)

GIRL. Wowkle, hist the winder. (*Wowkle goes to the window and stands there.*) Mr. Johnson: some men think so much of kisses, that they don't never want a second kiss from the same girl.

JOHNSON. That depends on whether they love her or not. All loves are not alike.

GIRL. No, but they all have the same aim — to git her, if they can.

JOHNSON. You don't know what love is.

GIRL. Nop, I don't. My mother used to say, Mr. Johnson, "Love's a tickling sensation at the heart that you can't scratch." (*Johnson rises and goes up to the door, laughing heartily.*) We'll let it go at that.

JOHNSON (*Turns to embrace The Girl*). Oh, Girl, you're bully! (*Wowkle clears the table.*)

GIRL (*Retreating*). Look out or you'll muss my roses.

JOHNSON. Hadn't you better take them off, then?

GIRL. Give a man an inch, an' he'll be at Sank Hosey before you know it.

JOHNSON (*Following The Girl*). Is there any one else?

GIRL (*Taking off her roses*). A man always says: "Who was the first one?" But the girl says: "Who'll be the next one?"

JOHNSON. But the time comes when there never will be a next one.

GIRL. No?

(*Takes off one of her gloves, blows into it and puts it in the bureau drawer.*)

JOHNSON. No.

GIRL. I'd hate to stake my pile on that! Git to your wigwam, Wowkle.

(*She takes off the other glove. Wowkle, who has put the dishes in a pail, grunts, hangs the papoose on her back and puts on her blanket.*)

JOHNSON. Must I go, too?

GIRL. Mm — not just yet. You can stay — a — a hour or two longer.

JOHNSON. Yes? Well, I'm like Dante: I want the world in that hour, because I'm afraid the door of this little paradise may be shut to me afterwards. Let's say that this is my one hour — the hour that gives me that kiss.

GIRL. Go long . . .

(*Wowkle has reached the door and opened it. A gust of wind, and a little snow blows in. The wind has been rising for some time, but The Girl and Johnson have not noticed it.*)

WOWKLE. Ugh — come snow.

(*The Girl and Johnson do not hear her. All through the following scene they are so engrossed in each other, that they don't notice Wowkle.*)

GIRL (*To Johnson*). You go to grass.

JOHNSON (*Embracing her — trying to kiss her*). Listen . . .

WOWKLE. Ugh! It snow . . . See . . .

GIRL. Why, if I let you have one, you'd take two.

JOHNSON. No, I wouldn't.

WOWKLE. Very bad.

JOHNSON. I swear I wouldn't.

WOWKLE. Ugh!

(*She is disgusted and goes out closing the door.*)

GIRL (*Retreating*). Oh, please . . .

JOHNSON (*Steps back a little and stands with his arms open*). One kiss — only one.

GIRL. 'Tain't no use. I lay down my hand to you.

(*She runs into his arms.*)

JOHNSON (*Embracing and kissing her*). I love you! (*The wind blows the snow against the windows. The vestibule doors slam. The curtains of the bed flap in the wind. A small basket on the wardrobe blows down. A flower-pot topples over. The blankets in the loft flap. The lamps flicker. Suddenly the wind dies down. The clock on the mantel strikes two. The wind begins to rise again. The Girl and Johnson are absolutely oblivious to the storm. After a little pause Johnson speaks, still holding her in his arms.*) What's your name, Girl — your real name?

GIRL. Min — Minnie. My father's name was Smith.

JOHNSON. Oh, Minnie Sm —

GIRL. But 'twasn't his right name.

JOHNSON. No?

GIRL. His right name was Falconer —

JOHNSON. Minnie Falconer. That's a pretty name.
(*He kisses her hand.*)

GIRL. I think that was it, — I ain't sure. That's what he said it was. I ain't sure of anything — only — jest you.
(*She snuggles closer.*)

JOHNSON. I've loved you ever since I first saw you. . . . So you're sure of me — sure. (*He gently puts her away, remembering what he is.*) You turn your head away, Girl, and don't you listen to me, for I'm not worth you. Don't you listen. You just say, "No — no — no!"
(*He turns away.*)

GIRL. Say, I know I ain't good enough for you, but I'll try hard. If you see anything better in me, why don't you bring it out? I've loved you ever since I saw you first . . . 'cause I knowed that you was the right man.

JOHNSON (*Conscience-smitten*). The right man. Ha, ha!

GIRL. Don't laugh.

JOHNSON (*Seriously*). I'm not laughing.

GIRL. Of course, every girl kind o' looks ahead.

JOHNSON. Yes.

GIRL. And figgers about — bein' — Well — Oh, you know —

JOHNSON. Yes, I know.
(*He is standing so that she cannot see his face.*)

GIRL. She figgers about being settled . . . and when the right one comes — why, she knows him — just as we both knew each other standin' in the road to Monterey. I said that day: "He's good — he's grand — he can have me!"

JOHNSON (*Meditatively, with longing — turning to her*). I could have you . . . (*With sudden resolve.*) I have looked into your heart, Girl, and into my own, and now I realize what this means for us both — for you, Girl, for you — and knowing that it seems hard to say good-by — as I should . . . and must . . . and will.
(*He kisses her, then turns to go.*)

GIRL. What do you mean?

JOHNSON (*Collecting himself*). I mean it's hard to go — and leave you here. The clock reminded me that long before this,

I should have been on the way. I shouldn't have come up here at all. God bless you, dear, — I love you as I never thought I could.

GIRL (*Troubled*). But it ain't for long you're goin'?

JOHNSON. For long? (*Resolving not to tell her the truth.*) No — no; but I've got to go now while I have the courage. (*Taking her face in his hands — kissing her.*) Oh, Girl! Girl! (*Kissing her hands.*) Good-by . . . (*Getting his hat and coat and opening door, he looks out.*) Why, it's snowing! (*As the door opens, all the sounds of the storm-swept woods are heard — the whispering and rocking of the storm-tossed pines, and the winds howling through a deep cañon. The Girl runs up and closes the outside and inside doors, goes to the window, pulls back the curtain, wipes the frost from the window-pane, trying to peer out.*)

GIRL. Snowing . . . It's the first snow this winter. You can't see an inch ahead. That's the way we git it up here. Look! Look!

JOHNSON (*Looking through the window*). This means —No . . . it can't mean that I can't leave Cloudy to-night. I must.

GIRL (*Turning to him*). Leave Cloudy? You couldn't keep to the trail. It means you can't git off this mountain to-night.

JOHNSON (*Thinking of the posse*). But I must!

GIRL. You can't leave this room to-night — you couldn't find your way three feet from this door — you, a stranger. . . . You don't know the trail anyway, unless you can see it.

JOHNSON (*Apprehensively*). But I can't stay here.

GIRL. Why not? It's all right. The boys'll come up an' dig us out to-morrow or day after. Plenty of food here — and you can have my bed.

JOHNSON. I couldn't think of taking it.

GIRL. I never use it cold nights. I always roll up in my rug in front of the fire. (*Amused.*) Think of it storming all this time, an' we didn't know it!

JOHNSON (*Pre-occupied — gravely*). But people coming up and finding me here, might . . .

GIRL. Might what?

(*Two shots, fired in quick succession, are heard in the distance at the foot of the mountain.*)

JOHNSON. What's that? . . . What's that?

GIRL. Wait . . . (*More shots are heard in the distance, fired at intervals.*) They've got a road-agent . . . It's the posse. Perhaps they've got Ramerrez or one of his band. (*Johnson rushes to the window, vainly trying to look out.*) Whoever it is, they're snowed in — couldn't git away. (*Another shot is heard.*) I guess that time another thief crept into camp. (*Meaning eternity.*)

JOHNSON (*Wincing*). Poor devil! But, of course — as you say — he's only a thief.

GIRL (*Who has thrown her pillow in front of the fire*). I ain't sorry for him.

JOHNSON (*After a slight pause*). You're right! (*Then, as though he had made up his mind, he takes down his overcoat and puts it on.*) Girl, I've been thinking . . . I've got to go — I've got to go. I have very important business at dawn — imperative.

GIRL. Ever sample one of our mountain blizzards? In five minutes you wouldn't know where you was. Your important business would land you at the bottom of a cañon — about twenty feet from here. You say you believe in Fate: well, it's caught up with you. You got to stay here.

(*She puts the tablecloth in the cupboard as though putting the house in order for the night.*)

JOHNSON. Well, it is Fate — my Fate — (*throwing down his coat*) that has always made it easy for me to do the thing I shouldn't do. As you say, Girl, if I can't go, I can't . . . (*looking at her intently*) but I know now as I stand here, that I'll never give you up.

GIRL (*Not quite understanding*). Why, what do you mean?

JOHNSON (*Deliberately — speaking above the crying of the wind*). I mean . . . suppose we say that's an omen — (*pointing as though to the falling snow*) that the old trail is blotted out and there's a fresh road. . . . Would you take it with me, a stranger — who says: "From this day I mean to be all that

you would have me"? Would you take it with me? Far away from here — and — forever?

GIRL. Well, show me the girl who would want to go to heaven alone. (*Johnson kisses her hand.*) I'll sell out the saloon. I'll go anywhere with you — you bet!

JOHNSON. You know what that means, don't you?

(*He sits by the table, looking at The Girl.*)

GIRL. Oh, yes. They's a little Spanish Mission Church here . . . I pass it 'most every day. I can look in an' see the light burnin' before the Virgin — an' all the saints standin' round with glassy eyes an' faded satin slippers — an' I often thought: what'd they think if I was to walk right in to be made — well, some man's wife. That's a great word, ain't it — wife? It makes your blood like pin-points thinkin' about it. There's somethin' kind o' holy about love, ain't there? Say: did you ever ask any other woman to marry you?

(*She sits down on the floor, leaning towards Johnson, in his arms.*)

JOHNSON. No.

GIRL. Oh, I'm glad! Ah — take me — I don't care where — as long's it's with you. Jest take me.

JOHNSON. So help me heaven, I'm going to, Girl. You're worth something better than me, Girl; but they say love works miracles every hour: it weakens the strong and strengthens the weak. With all my soul I love you. . . .

(*He notices that she is dozing.*) Why, Minnie . . . Minnie . . .

GIRL (*Waking with a start*). I wasn't asleep . . . I'm jest happy an' let down, that's all. Say, I'm awful sorry — I've got to say good-night.

JOHNSON. Good-night.

(*He kisses her.*) (*They rise.*)

GIRL. That's your bed over there.

JOHNSON. I hate to take it. Hadn't you better take the bed and let me sleep by the fire?

GIRL. Nop.

(*She moves the barrel rocking-chair away from the fireplace.*)

JOHNSON. Are you sure you will be more comfortable there?

GIRL. You bet I will — don't worry.

JOHNSON. Very well.

(*He throws his coat and hat on the bed.*)

GIRL (*As she spreads rugs on the floor in front of the fire*). This beats a bed any time. There's one thing — (*reaching up and pulling down a quilt from the loft*) — you don't have to make it up in the morning. (*She puts a lighted candle on the hearth, blows out the lamps on the mantel, the stand and the bureau. She climbs up on the table, turns down the hanging lamp, steps to the floor, notices that she has turned it too low, glances at Johnson, making sure that he does not see her, gets up on the table again, turns the wick higher, then goes into the wardrobe where she makes her toilet for the night.*) Now, you can talk to me from your bunk, and I'll talk to you from mine.

JOHNSON. Good-night.

GIRL. Good-night.

JOHNSON (*Starts to go to bed — turns quickly — listens — then goes towards the bed — pauses — runs to the door and listens. His face is full of resolve. He shows the desperado's ability to meet all emergencies. He speaks quietly — in fact, the scene between these two, from this moment until the door is opened, must be done in the lowest audible tones — to convey the impression that those outside do not hear*). What's that?

GIRL. That's snow slidin' . . . Good-night.

JOHNSON. God bless you, Girl. Thank you. (*He goes behind the curtains of the bed. A pause.*) H'm . . . there *is* something out there . . . sounded like some one calling.

GIRL. That's only the wind. (*She comes out of the wardrobe.*) It's gettin' colder, ain't it? (*She sits on the floor, takes off her slippers and puts on moccasins, then rises and comes down to the fire, arranges the rugs and pillow, says a brief prayer, lies down and tucks herself in.*) Good-night again.

JOHNSON. Good-night.

GIRL (*Lifting up her head*). Say, what's your first name?

JOHNSON. Dick.

GIRL (*Sentimentally*). So long, Dick.

(*She snuggles down again in the folds of the rug.*)

JOHNSON. So long, Girl.

GIRL (*Half rising*). Say, Dick, are you sure you don't know that Nina Micheltoreña?

JOHNSON (*After a slight pause*). Sure.

GIRL (*With a satisfied air*). Good-night.

(*She lies down again.*)

JOHNSON. Good-night.

(*Suddenly a voice is heard to call and some one knocks on the door.*)

(*The Girl rises and sets the candle on the table.*)

(*Johnson throws open the curtains and pulls his revolvers from his pockets.*)

GIRL. There *is* some one calling.

NICK. Hello!

GIRL. Listen! What could that —

JOHNSON (*In a low voice*). Don't answer.

GIRL. Who can it be?

JOHNSON. You can't let anybody in here — they wouldn't understand.

GIRL. Understand what?

(*She goes to the window. It never occurs to her that the situation is compromising.*)

JOHNSON. Sh!

GIRL. It's the posse. How did they ever risk it in this blizzard? What can they want?

JOHNSON (*Low, but very distinctly, above the rising wind, his hands on his pistols*). Don't answer.

NICK (*Voice outside*). Min! Minnie! Girl!

GIRL (*Calling off through the door*). What do you want? (*Turning quickly to Johnson.*) What did you say?

JOHNSON. Don't let them in.

SONORA'S VOICE. Are you all right, Girl?

GIRL (*Calling loudly through the door*). Yes, Sonora, I'm all right. (*Turning again to Johnson.*) Jack Rance is there . . . If he was to see you here — he's that jealous — I'd be afraid of him. (*Listening at the door.*) And Ashby's there and —

JOHNSON (*Now sure that they are after him*). Ashby!

NICK (*Outside*). We want to come in.

JOHNSON. No.

GIRL (*Glibly, calling*). You can't come in. (*To Johnson.*) What will I say?

JOHNSON (*Quietly*). You've gone to bed.

GIRL. Oh, yes. (*To Nick, outside.*) I've gone to bed — I'm in bed now.

ASHBY (*Outside*). We've come to warn you.

GIRL. They've come to warn me.

NICK (*Outside*). Ramerrez . . .

GIRL (*Calling through door*). What?

NICK. Ramerrez is on the trail.

GIRL. Ramerrez is on the trail. (*To Johnson.*) I got to let 'em in. (*Johnson gets behind the curtains of the bed where he is entirely concealed.*) I can't keep 'em out such a night. (*Calling to men outside.*) Come on in, boys.

(*She opens the door, and the men enter — Rance first.*)

(*Rance, wearing a luxurious fur overcoat, his trousers tucked into his high-heeled boots, goes to the candle, warming his hands over it, taking off his gloves, brushing the snow off with his handkerchief. Sonora, wearing a buffalo overcoat, cap, ear muffs and high boots, comes down to the fireplace. Ashby follows with a lighted lantern; he is dressed as before, but wears an overcoat over the one in which he first appeared. Nick comes down to The Girl, then crosses to the fire; he has pieces of blanket tied round his legs and feet. Rance turns up the wick of the hanging lamp. All are snow-covered.*)

SONORA (*As he goes to the fireplace*). Ow! Glad you are safe. I'm froze!

(*He stamps his feet and rubs his hands together.*)

NICK. The Polka has had a narrow squeak, Girl.

GIRL (*Seated*). Why, what's the matter, Nick?

RANCE (*Suspiciously*). It takes you a long time to get up, — and you don't seem to have so much on you, either.

GIRL (*Indignantly*). Well, upon my —

(*She rises and, picking up a rug from the floor, wraps it round her knees and sits. The wind rises and falls, crying in the cañons.*)

SONORA. We thought sure you was in trouble. My breath jest stopped . . .

GIRL. Me — in trouble?

RANCE. See here — that man Johnson —

SONORA. Fellow you was dancin' with —

RANCE (*With a grimace of pleasure, spreading his stiffened fingers before the blaze*). Your polkying friend Johnson is Ramerrez.

GIRL (*Blankly*). What'd you say?

ASHBY. I warned you. Bank with us oftener.

GIRL (*Dazed*). What did you say?

RANCE. We say — Johnson was a —

GIRL. What?

RANCE. Are you deef? The fellow you've been polkying with is the man that has been asking people to hold up their hands.

GIRL (*Lightly, yet positively*). Go on! You can't hand me out that.

RANCE. You don't believe it yet, eh?

GIRL (*Imitating his "yet"*). No, I don't believe it yet, eh! I know he isn't.

RANCE. Well, he *is* Ramerrez, and he *did* come to the Polka to rob it.

GIRL. But he didn't rob it.

SONORA. That's what gits me — he didn't.

GIRL. I should think it would git you.

ASHBY. We've got his horse.

SONORA. I never knew one of these men to separate from his horse.

RANCE. Oh, well, if we've got his horse, with this storm on, we've got him. The last seen of Johnson he was heading this way. You seen anything of him?

GIRL. Heading this way?

SONORA. So Nick said.

(*The Girl gives Nick a glance.*)

NICK. He was. Sid says he saw him, too.

RANCE. But the trail ends here — and if she hasn't seen him — (*he looks at The Girl*) — where was he going?

(*Nick, spying Johnson's cigar, recognizes it as one of their rare*

dollar Havanas. The Girl's eyes follow Nick's glance. Unseen by Rance, there is a glance between Nick and The Girl.)

NICK (*To himself*). Oh, my God!

SONORA (*Answering Rance's question*). Yes, where was he going?

(*Rance looks at The Girl, now intercepting Nick's glance.*)

NICK. Well, I thought I seen him — I couldn't swear to it. You see, it was so dark. Oh, that Sidney Cove's a liar, anyway.

(*Nick puts the tell-tale cigar in his pocket, looking furtively about to make sure that he is not seen.*)

ASHBY. He's snowed under. Something scared him off, an' he lit off without his horse.

GIRL (*Sitting down*). Ha! How do you know that man is a road-agent?

SONORA (*Warming his hands and breathing on his fingers*). Well, two greasers jest now was pretty positive of it before they quit.

GIRL (*With scorn*). Greasers! Oh!

RANCE. But the woman knew him — she knew him.

(*Sitting on the table.*)

GIRL (*Quietly, for the first time impressed*). The woman? What'd you say?

SONORA. It was the woman who first told us that Ramerrez was here — to rob the Polka.

RANCE. She's down at the Palmetto now.

ASHBY. It will cost us the reward.

RANCE. But Ramerrez is trapped.

GIRL. Who is this woman?

RANCE (*As though to excite her jealousy*). Why, the woman from the back trail — that damn —

GIRL. Nina Micheltoreña?

RANCE. H'm, h'm.

GIRL. Then she knows him. She *does* know him . . .

(*She rises again.*)

RANCE. He was the sort of man who polkas with you first — then cuts your throat.

GIRL (*Turning on Rance*). It's my throat, ain't it?

RANCE. Well, I'll be —

NICK (*Going to Rance and speaking to him in a low voice*). Say, she's cut up because she vouched for him. Don't rub it in.

GIRL. Nina Micheltoreña . . . How did she know it?

SONORA. Why, from what she said —

RANCE. She's his girl. She's —

GIRL. His girl?

RANCE. Yes, she gave us his picture — (*taking a picture from his pocket, and turning it over*) — with "Love" on the back.

GIRL (*Takes the picture, looks at it, and laughs*). Nina Micheltoreña, eh? Ha! I'm sorry I vouched for him, Mr. Ashby.

RANCE. Ah!

GIRL (*So that Ashby shall not suspect*). I suppose they had one of them little lovers' quarrels that made her tell you, eh? He's the kind of man that sort o' polkys with every girl he meets. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

RANCE. What are you laughing at?

GIRL (*Turning to Rance again*). Oh, nothing — only it's kind o' damn funny how things come out, — ain't it? Took in! Nina Micheltoreña! Nice company he keeps. One of them Cachuca girls with eye-lashes at half mast, ha! And she sold him out — for money. Ah, you're a better guesser than I am, Jack.

RANCE (*Grimly*). Yes.

GIRL. Well, it's gittin' late. Thank you. Good-night, boys.

SONORA. Hell, boys! Come on and let a lady go to bed. Good-night, Girl.

(*He goes to the door, followed by the other men, Ashby following Sonora, then Rance and, last, Nick. When the door opens, all the lamps flicker in the wind.*)

GIRL. Good-night, Sonora. Good-night, Mr. Ashby. Good-night, Jack.

SONORA. Lordy! Will we ever git down again?

NICK (*As the others are outside, looking at her meaningly*). You want *me* to stay?

GIRL (*Going to the door*). No. Good-night. (*The men all go off calling "good-night", etc. The Girl shuts the door, and*

stands with her back against it. With a change of manner, her eyes blazing.) Come out of that — step out there! (*Johnson appears between the curtains of the bed.*) You came here to rob me.

JOHNSON (*Quietly*). I didn't.

GIRL (*Viciously*). You lie!

JOHNSON. I don't.

GIRL. You do.

JOHNSON. I — I admit that every circumstance points to —

GIRL. Stop! Don't you give me any more of that Webster Dictionary talk — but git to cases. If you didn't come here to steal — you came to the Polka to rob it, didn't you?

JOHNSON (*With sudden determination*). Yes, I did, but when I knew it was you who —

(*He goes towards her.*)

GIRL. Wait! Wait! (*Johnson pauses.*) Don't you take a step — look out, or I'll — A road-agent . . . a road-agent! . . . Well, ain't it my luck? Wouldn't anybody know to look at me that a gentleman wouldn't fall my way? A road-agent . . . Oh! Oh! Oh! (*Then with a revulsion of feeling.*) You can git now — git! You — you thief! You imposer on a decent woman. I ought to have told the boys — but I wasn't goin' to let on I could be so took in. I wasn't goin' to be the joke of the world, with you behind the curtain, an' me eatin' charlotte rusks and lemming turnovers and a-polkering with a road-agent. Ha! But now you can git! Now you can git!

(*She sits on the table, looking straight before her as though to forget the sight of the man.*)

JOHNSON (*In a low voice*). One word — only one word. . . . I'm not going to say anything in defense of myself. It's all true — everything is true, except that I would have stolen from you. I am called Ramerrez — I have robbed — I am a vagabond — a vagabond by birth — a cheat and a swindler by profession. I'm all that — and my father was all that before me. I was born, brought up, educated, thrived on thieves' money — but until six months ago, when he died, I

didn't know it. I lived in Monterey — Monterey where we met. I lived decently. I wasn't the thing I am to-day. I only learned the truth when he died and left me with a rancho and a band of thieves — nothing else — nothing for us all — and I . . . I was my father's son — no excuse . . . it was in me — in the blood . . . I took to the road. I didn't mind much after — the first time. I only drew the line at killing. I wouldn't have that. And that's the man I am — the blackguard I am. (*With feeling.*) But, so help me God, from the moment I kissed you to-night, I meant to change. I meant to change.

GIRL (*Sniffling*). The devil you did!

JOHNSON (*Advancing a step*). I did, believe me — I did. I meant to go straight and take you with me — but honestly . . . when I could do it honestly. I meant to work for you. Every word you said to me to-night about being a thief, cut me like a knife. Over and over again, I said to myself: "She must never know." Now . . . (*A slight pause.*) Well, — I've finished.

GIRL. Is that all?

JOHNSON. No. Yes. What's the use? That's all.

GIRL (*Half crying*). Well, there's jest one thing you've overlooked explainin', Mr. Johnson. It shows jest exactly what you are. It wasn't so much bein' a road-agent I got against you — it's this: you kissed me. You kissed me. You got my first kiss.

JOHNSON. Yes, damn me!

GIRL. You said you'd been thinkin' of me ever since you saw me at Monterey — an' all the time you'd walked straight off and been kissing that other woman. You've got a girl. It's that I've got against you. It's my first kiss I've got against you. It's that damned Nina Micheltoreña that I can't forgive. But now you can git — you can git! (*Rushing to the door and opening it.*) If they kill you, so much the better. I don't care — I don't care — I don't care!

JOHNSON. You're right. You're right. By God! You're right.

(*He takes out a pistol, but, not much caring whether he lives or dies, he looks at the pistol, then puts it back in his pocket and goes out empty-handed — his head bowed.*)

GIRL. That's the end of that — that's the end of that. (*She goes to the door, closes it.*) I don't care — I don't care. I'll be like the rest of the women I've seen. I'll give that Nina Micheltoreña cards and spades. (*Wipes her nose.*) There'll be another huzzy around here. (*At that moment, we hear a shot outside, close at hand.*) They've got him . . . (*With a bravado toss of her head.*) Well, I don't care — I don't care. (*Johnson falls against the door outside. The Girl, with a revulsion of feeling, rushes to the door, opens it, and he staggers in, her arms about him. Johnson leans against the wall. The Girl closes the door.*)

JOHNSON (*Holding his hand to his right side*). . . . Don't lock the door . . . I'm going out again . . . I'm going out . . . (*He swings round, lurches and nearly falls as The Girl pushes him onto a chair.*) Don't bar the door. Open it . . . Open it . . . By God! I won't hide behind a woman.

GIRL (*Leaning over Johnson*). I love you an' I'm goin' to stand by you. You asked me to go away with you. (*Crosses for the whiskey bottle and a glass.*) You get out of this, an' I will. If you can't save your own soul — (*There is a rap on the window. Rance is peering through, but he cannot see Johnson. The Girl sets down the bottle and glass and pauses. She looks up at the ladder to the loft, gets on a chair and lets it down. Rance goes from the window to the door.*) — I'm goin' to save it for you. You're the man that had my first kiss. Go up there!

(*In a lower voice, never pausing, she urges Johnson to the loft.*)

JOHNSON (*His handkerchief pressed to his side*). No — no — no — no — Not here.

GIRL. Do you want them to see you in my cabin? Hurry . . . Hurry . . .

JOHNSON. No — No —

(*There is a rap on the door. She gives him a push, and with an effort Johnson gradually climbs up the ladder, reeling as he goes.*)

GIRL. Yes, you can do it — you can — you're the man I love. You've got to show me the man that's in you. Go on. . . . Go on. . . . (*There is a second rap on the door.*) Just a step — a step.

JOHNSON. I can't . . . I can't.

(*He reaches the loft, collapses, falling to his knees. He lies on the floor of the loft, one outstretched hand holding the handkerchief. The Girl swings the ladder up.*)

GIRL (*Looks up, calls softly*). You can. Don't move. (*There is another rap on the door.*) The cracks are wide — take that handkerchief away. (*He draws the handkerchief out of sight.*) That's it. (*There is another knock. The Girl calls off.*) Yes, yes, in a minute. (*In a whisper to Johnson.*) Don't move. (*The door opens and Rance appears. He slams the door behind him.*) Well, what do you want now? You can't come in here, Jack Rance.

RANCE. No more Jack Rance. It's the Sheriff after Mr. Johnson.

GIRL. What?

RANCE. I saw him coming in here.

(*He cocks his revolver.*)

GIRL. It's more than I did — (*Rance glances at the bed, opening the curtains.*) and the door was barred. Do you think I want to shield a man who tried to rob me? If you doubt my word, go on — search the place; but that ends your acquaintance with the Polka. Don't you ever speak to me again — we're through!

RANCE. Wait a minute . . . What's that? (*He listens — the wind is calling. After a slight pause, Rance comes down to the table. The Girl is leaning against the bureau. Rance uncocks his revolver, puts it in the holster, takes off his hat, shakes the water from it, and drops it on the table. His eyes never leave The Girl's face.*) I saw some one standing outside — there — (*He crosses to the fireplace.*) against the white snow. (*Taking off his overcoat.*) I fired. (*Shaking the coat.*) I could have sworn it was a man.

GIRL. Go on — go on — finish your search, — then never speak to me again.

RANCE (*Seeing that he has gone too far — turning to her*). Say, I — I don't want to quarrel with you.

GIRL. Go on — go on — and then leave a lady to herself to git to bed. Go on and git it over.

(*She goes up to the bureau, her back to Rance.*)

RANCE. I'm crazy about you. I could have sworn I saw — You know it's just you for me — just you — and damn the man you like better! I — I — Even yet I — I can't — (*starting to put on his coat*) get over the queer look on your face when I told you who that man really was. You don't love him, do you? (*A pause. He throws the coat down on the floor and advances towards her.*) Do you?

GIRL (*Lightly*). Who? Me?

(*With a forced laugh, she eyes Rance disdainfully.*)

RANCE (*His feelings somewhat relieved, takes a step towards her*). Say, was your answer to-night final about marrying me?

GIRL (*Coyly, flirting with him*). I might think it over, Jack.

(*With another somewhat artificial laugh.*)

RANCE. Minnie . . . (*Coming close to her.*) I love you . . . (*Putting his arms about her, kissing her.*) I love you.

(*She struggles to escape from him, and, picking up the bottle from the table, raises it to strike him, then sinks to the floor, sobbing.*)

GIRL (*Nervously*). Oh, my God, I —

(*Rance stands looking down at her.*)

RANCE (*With the nasty laugh of a man whose vanity is hurt*). Ha! Ha! Ha! God! I — I didn't think it was that bad, — I didn't. I am much obliged to you. Thank you. (*Taking his cap from the table and going up towards the door.*) Good-night. (*Taking up his coat and starting to put it on.*) Good-night. Much obliged. Can't you — can't you even say good-night?

(*He has his coat in his left hand, his cap in his right. The Girl rubs her hands on her dress and comes reluctantly towards him. He drops his cap.*)

GIRL. Yes. Good-night, Jack Rance. Good-night, Jack Rance, I —

(*As he holds out his hand, a drop of blood from the loft falls on it.*)

RANCE (*Slowly, after a pause*). Look at my hand . . . (*Pulls out his handkerchief and wipes his hand.*) . . . my hand. (*Looking at the blood.*) That's blood.

GIRL. Yes, I must have scratched you just now. I'm awful sorry.

RANCE. There's no scratch there. There isn't a mark.

(*More blood falls on the outstretched hand, holding the handkerchief.*)

GIRL (*Quickly*). Yes, but there will be in the morning, Jack. You'll see in the morning.

RANCE (*Looks towards the loft. Placing his hand on his pistol, he puts his handkerchief in his pocket*). He's up there.

GIRL (*Holding his hand which grasps the revolver*). No, he isn't, Jack. No, he isn't. No, he —

RANCE. You go straight to the devil.

(*He picks up a chair to climb up — then sees the ladder.*)

GIRL (*Trying to stop Rance*). No, he isn't, Jack. Not there, Jack. Not there, Jack. He is not there —

(*Drawing down the ladder.*)

RANCE. Mr. Johnson, come down.

GIRL. Wait a minute, Jack . . . Wait a minute . . .

RANCE (*As Johnson moves towards the top of the ladder*). Come down, or I'll —

GIRL. Wait jest a minute, Jack — jest a minute . . .

RANCE (*His revolver leveled at Johnson*). Come down here!

(*Step by step, Johnson comes down the ladder, his eyes fastened on Rance. The Girl stands watching Johnson. Johnson's hands, which are up, slowly fall, and, with unseeing eyes, he lurches to the chair behind the table, falls forward, his head resting on the table — unconscious, half in the shadow. Rance puts his revolver in the holster.*)

GIRL. Don't you see he can't hold up his hands? Oh, Jack, don't make him. Don't you see he can't? Oh, Jack, don't make him. No, no, wait, Jack, jest a minute — wait!

RANCE (*Leaning over Johnson*). Wait a minute? What for? (*Laughs — a low, unctuous laugh.*) So you dropped into the

Polka, Mr. Johnson, to play me a little game of poker to-night? Ha! Ha! Ha! Funny how things change about in an hour or two. You think you can play poker? That's your conviction, is it? Ha! Ha! Ha! Well, you can play freeze-out as to your chances, Mr. Johnson, of Sacramento! It's shooting or the tree. Speak up — which will you have?

GIRL (*Who has picked up her pistol — in a low voice, quiet but tense*). You better stop that laughing, or you'll finish it in some other place where things ain't quite so funny. (*Something in her voice strikes Rance and he stops laughing.*) He doesn't hear you. He's out of it. But me — me — I hear you — I ain't out of it. You're a gambler — he was, too — so am I. (*Having engaged Rance's attention, she throws the pistol back into the drawer.*) I live on chance money — drink money — card money — saloon money. We're gamblers — we're all gamblers! (*Leaning over towards Rance.*) You asked me to-night if my answer to you was final. Now's your chance! I'll play you a game — straight poker. It's two out of three for me. Hatin' the sight of you — it's the nearest chance you'll ever git for me.

RANCE. Do you mean —

GIRL. With the wife in Noo Orleans — all right. If you're lucky, you git him an' me; but if you lose, this man settin' between us is mine — mine to do with as I please — an' you shut up and lose like a gentleman.

RANCE (*Looking in her eyes*). You must be crazy about him.

GIRL (*Briefly*). That's my business.

RANCE. Do you know you're talking to the Sheriff?

GIRL. I'm talkin' to Jack Rance, the gambler.

RANCE (*Quietly and coolly*). You're right. (*Standing upright.*) And I'm just fool enough to take you up. (*Looks for a chair.*) Ah! (*Brings the chair down, placing it before the table.*) You and the cards have got into my blood. I'll take you. (*He pulls off the table-cover and throws it on the floor.*)

GIRL. Your word?

RANCE. I can lose like a gentleman. (*She starts to draw back her hand, but he grasps it.*) But, my God! I'm hungry for

you — and, if I'm lucky, I'll take it out on you so long as God lets you breathe.

GIRL (*Draws away from him*). Fix the lamp. (*Rance, his eyes still on her, reaches up to the lamp, does not find it at first, looks up, turns up the wick.*) Wait jest a minute — jest a minute. (*She goes into the wardrobe with the candle.*)

RANCE. What are you waiting for?

(*He takes a pack of cards from his pocket, sits at the table and shuffles them.*)

GIRL (*In the closet*). I'm jest gettin' the cards, an' kind o' — steadyin' my nerves.

RANCE. I've got a deck here.

GIRL (*Coming out of the wardrobe, blowing out the candle, and throwing it on the floor*). We'll use a fresh deck. (*Laying a fresh pack of cards on the table.*) There's a good deal dependin' on this, Jack Rance. (*The Girl sits. Rance looks at her, then lays aside his own cards and takes hers.*) Are you — ready?

RANCE. Ready? Yes, I'm ready. Cut for deal. (*She cuts. Rance shuffles.*) This is a case of show-down.

GIRL. Show-down.

RANCE. Cut. (*Begins to deal.*) The best two out of three.

GIRL. Best two out of three.

RANCE (*As he glances over the cards he has drawn — in a low voice — colloquially*). What do you see in him?

GIRL. What do you see in me, Jack? (*Taking up her cards.*) What have you got?

RANCE. King high.

GIRL. King high.

RANCE (*Showing her the hand*). Jack next.

GIRL (*Showing her hand to Rance*). Queen next.

RANCE. You've got it. (*Throws down his hand. She shuffles.*) You've made a mistake on Johnson.

GIRL (*Dealing*). If I have, Jack, it's my mistake. What have you got?

RANCE. One pair — aces.

(*Showing her the cards.*)

GIRL. Nothing.

(*Throwing down her cards.*)

RANCE (*Shuffles the cards*). We're even. We're even.

GIRL. It's the next hand that tells, Jack, ain't it?

RANCE. Yes.

GIRL. I'm awfully sorry it's the next hand that tells. I — I — want to say that no matter how it comes out —

RANCE. Cut.

(*She cuts the cards and he picks them up and deals.*)

GIRL. — that I'll always think of you the best I can, and I want you to do the same for me.

RANCE. You heard what I said.

GIRL (*Starts to draw her cards towards her. He reaches across, places his hand over hers and over the cards*). Yes.

RANCE. But I have got a feeling that I win — that in one minute I'll hold you in my arms. (*He spreads out his cards, still holding her hand and looking at her. Then, as though resolved to face the consequences, he looks at his cards. She is leaning forward and her hand is being drawn towards him. As he sees his cards, he smiles. The Girl collapses with a shudder. He leans forward. Very calmly.*) I win.

GIRL (*Very anxiously*). Think so?

RANCE. Three Kings and it's the last hand.

(*Showing his cards to The Girl.*)

GIRL. Oh, Jack, quick — get me something — I'm fainting!

RANCE (*Throws the cards face down on the table*). Where? Where?

GIRL. There.

RANCE (*Finds the bottle, but not the glass*). Oh, yes, here it is — here's the bottle. Where's a glass? Where's that damn glass?

(*As Rance turns away, she puts her cards in the bosom of her dress and draws five cards from her stocking.*)

GIRL. Hurry . . . Hurry . . .

RANCE (*Dropping the bottle, turning and leaning forward as if to impress her, his arm round her neck*). You're fainting because you've lost.

Photo. Byron, N. Y.

Scene from THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

JACK RANCE (*Frank Keenan*) *to the* GIRL (*Blanche Bates*).

"But I have got a feeling that I win — that in one minute I'll hold you in my arms."

GIRL (*Rises, laying down her hand on the table*). No, Jack — it's because I've won — three aces and a pair!

(*He looks at her hand. There is a slight pause.*)

RANCE. Good-night.

(*Always the gambler, he picks up his hat and coat and goes.*)

(*The Girl drops the cards and takes Johnson in her arms.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: *The interior of a typical mining camp dance-hall of the period.*

The walls are of rough boards nailed across upright beams. The mines are closed on account of the weather, and the hall is decorated in honor of the opening of the "Academy." Garlands of pine and wreaths of red berries hang over the doors and windows. Yellow curtains hang at the windows. Eagles' wings, as well as wings of smaller birds, are tacked to the wall. Antlers (on which the miners hang their hats when the "Academy" is in session) are fastened to the wall, also birds' wings and a motto, painted on an old weather-beaten piece of wood, "Live and Learn." A stuffed game-cock and a candle lamp with a reflector are over a door at right. A horseshoe is fastened over the door to the exterior. A lamp hangs from the centre of the ceiling, and stuck in its cheap iron brackets are flags whose stars indicate the number of States of that period. At the back, towards the right, is a platform on which the teacher's home-made desk stands. It is decorated with a garland of pine. A bunch of red and white berries, a ruler, chalk, a whiskey bottle, glass and bell are on the desk. A box is used for the teacher's seat. A blackboard is at the back, standing on the floor and resting against the table. An old sheet-iron stove, heavily dented, is below the desk. The fire is burning brightly. The stove has an iron railing fastened to the base, on which the miners rest their feet. The stove-pipe goes up through the ceiling. Whittled benches are arranged about the room and two or three chairs. Sonora's coat is lying on a chair, and Trinidad's jacket is on the bench against

the wall at back. Doors lead to the barroom, which we saw in the first act, and a glimpse of the bar is shown. Fastened to the frame of one of these doors is a large hand, rudely painted, the index finger pointing to the words, "To the bar!" A red curtain cuts off the balcony on this same side of the room. Another door, on the opposite side of the room, leads to a lean-to in which there is a door leading to the exterior. A door at back opens directly upon the trail, and, when this door is ajar, one sees the snow-covered country and the green firs of Cloudy Mountain heavily weighted by snow. It is a bright winter's morning.

At the rise of the curtain, Jack Rance is sitting near the fire, — worn, pale and waxen. He has not slept, and his eyes are red and half closed as he sits thinking. He is no longer immaculate in dress, — his necktie is partly undone, his waistcoat is unfastened, his boots unpolished, his hair is ruffled and his cigar (in his hand) has gone out. Nick, standing near the foot of the platform, seems troubled as he looks through the window as though towards The Girl's cabin.

NICK. I'd be willin' to lose the profits of the bar, if we could git back to a week ago, before Johnson walked into this room. (*He pours out a drink.*)

RANCE (*Showing feeling*). Johnson! By — (*Taking off his hat.*) — week — a week . . . A week in her cabin — nursed and kissed . . .

NICK (*Remonstrating*). Oh, say, Rance!

RANCE. You bet she kissed him, Nick. It was all I could do to keep from telling the whole camp he was up there.

NICK. But you didn't. If I hadn't been let into the game by the Girl, I'd a-thought you were a level Sheriff, looking for him. Rance, you're my deal of a perfect gent.

RANCE. What did she see in that Sacramento shrimp to love?

NICK (*Puts his foot on a chair, hands the drink to Rance*). Well, you see, I figger it out this way, boss: love's like a drink that gits a-holt on you, and you can't quit . . . it's a turn of the head, or a touch of the hands, or it's a half sort of smile — and you're doped — doped with a feelin' like strong liquor

runnin' through your veins — (*Rance drops the hand which holds the glass*) an' there ain't nothin' on earth can break it up, once you've got the habit. That's love. I've got it — you've got it — the boys've got it — the Girl's got it — the whole damn world's got it! It's all the heaven there is on earth, and, in nine cases out of ten, it's hell.

(*There is a pause.*)

(*Rance, deep in thought, lets his glass tip and his whiskey drip to the floor. Nick touches Rance's arm, points to the whiskey. Rance takes out his watch, glances at it, hands the glass back to Nick, who goes towards the door leading to the bar.*)

RANCE. Well, Nick, her road-agent's got off by now.

(*Looking at his watch.*)

NICK. Left Cloudy at three o'clock this morning — five hours off.

(*Rance takes out a match, strikes it on the stove, then lights his cigar.*)

(*Suddenly we hear a voice calling.*)

RIDER OF THE PONY EXPRESS (*Outside*). Hello!

NICK. Pony Express! Got through at last!

(*Goes to the barroom.*)

(*The Rider of the Pony Express comes in from the barroom, muffled up to his eyes.*)

RIDER OF THE PONY EXPRESS. Hello, boys! (*Giving a letter to the Deputy Sheriff, who comes in from the lean-to.*) Letter for Ashby. Well, boys, how'd you like bein' snowed in for a week?

RANCE. Ashby ain't up yet. Dep: call Ashby.

(*The Deputy Sheriff goes off at the left.*)

RIDER OF THE PONY EXPRESS (*At the stove*). Boys: there's a rumor up at the Ridge that you all let Ramerrez freeze, an' missed a hangin'. Say: they're roaring at you, boys. So long!

(*Sonora and Trinidad, who have appeared from the barroom, give the Rider a hard glance as he goes out through the bar.*)

SONORA (*Calling after the Pony Express Rider*). Wait! Says you to the boys at the Ridge as you ride by — the Academy at Cloudy is open to-day — says you — full blast.

(*We hear a door slam as the Rider goes on his way.*)

TRINIDAD (*Calling after the Rider*). Whoopee! Whoop! They ain't got no Academy at the Ridge.

NICK (*Bringing in whiskey for Trinidad and Sonora*). Here, Sonora.

RANCE (*With a sneer*). Academy! Ha! Ha! Academy!

SONORA. What's the matter with you, Rance, anyway? We began this Academy game together — we boys an' the Girl — an' there's a — (*spits on the floor*) — pretty piece of sentiment back of it. She's taught some of us our letters and —

TRINIDAD. He's wearin' mournin' because Johnson didn't fall alive into his hands.

SONORA. Is that it?

TRINIDAD (*To Rance*). Ain't it enough that he must be lyin' dead down some cañon with his mouth full of snow?

SONORA. You done all you could to git him. The boys is all satisfied he's dead.

(*Nick gives Sonora a sharp look, then turns guiltily to Rance.*)

RANCE (*Rising, walking about restlessly*). Yes — he's dead. The matter with *me* is, I'm a "Chink."

(*He goes up to the window and glances out.*)

ALL. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

RANCE. Boys: it's all up with the Girl and me.

TRINIDAD (*Self-consciously*). Throwed him!

SONORA (*In a low voice to Nick, who has picked up the empty glasses and is standing near the window*). As sure's you live, she's throwed him over for me.

(*Nick hastily leaves the room with the glasses — coming back at once.*)

TRINIDAD (*Singing in his glee*). "Will old dog Tray remember me."

SONORA (*Crossing to the door at the left*). The percession will now form to the Academy wood-pile, to finish splittin' wood for teacher.

TRINIDAD *and* SONORA (*Singing*). "Old dog Tray remember me."

SONORA (*Chuckling to himself*). For me!

(*They go out to the lean-to.*)

DEPUTY (*Entering excitedly*). Ashby's out with a posse. (*Rance turns quickly.*) Got off just after three this morning. (*Closes the door.*)

NICK. What?

RANCE (*Aside to Nick, with much excitement*). He's after Johnson!

NICK. Help yourself, Dep.

(*The Deputy goes into the barroom.*)

RANCE. Ashby's after Johnson! He was watching that horse — took him ten minutes to saddle up. Johnson has ten minutes' start. (*Hopefully.*) Oh, God! (*Going towards the bar.*) They'll never get him. Johnson's a wonder on the road. You got to take your hat off to the damn cuss. (*He passes off.*)

(*We hear the whoop of approaching miners coming to school.*)

(*Sonora enters with an armful of wood, which he puts on the floor near the stove.*)

(*Trinidad enters, runs to the door at the back and opens it, then puts on his jacket.*)

(*The Deputy strolls in from the bar.*)

SONORA. Boys gatherin' for school.

(*Handsome, Happy, Joe, a gambler, and a miner, come into the room, playing leap-frog as they enter, talking and laughing. Their boots are covered with snow. Happy goes up to the teacher's desk and picks up a book tied in a red handkerchief.*)

HAPPY. Here, Trin, — here's the book.

(*He throws it to Trinidad, who throws it to Sonora, Sonora to Joe, Joe to Handsome, Handsome to Sonora.*)

(*Bucking Billy, a new scholar from Watson's Camp, comes in.*)

THE DEPUTY SHERIFF. Sh, boys! Noo scholer from Watson's. (*Indicating Bucking Billy.*)

(*Billy is a large, awkward miner, wearing an overcoat, muffler and top boots with brass tips. He carries a dinner pail which contains a sandwich and whiskey flask. He has a slate under his arm.*)

SONORA (*As all stare at Billy*). Did you ever play lame soldier, m'friend?

BUCKING BILLY. No.

SONORA. We'll play it after school. You'll be the stirrup. (*To the others — with a wink.*) We'll initiate him.

NICK (*Up at the window*). Boys, boys, here she is.

HAPPY (*Looking out of the window*). Here comes the Girl.

SONORA. Fix the seats.

(*All save Nick, Trinidad and one miner hasten off.*)

TRINIDAD (*Confidentially*). Here, Nick: you don't think today'd be a good time to put the splice question to her?

NICK (*Dubiously*). I wouldn't rush her. You got plenty of time.

(*He hangs the blackboard on the wall. Sonora enters with a cask. The Miner gets another cask. Handsome enters with a plank, which he lays across the two casks. This forms a long table for the students. Sonora picks up his coat, which is lying on a chair, and puts it on hurriedly. Happy, the Deputy, and the Miner arrange more benches.*)

TRINIDAD. Hurry up, boys — hurry up! Git everything in order.

(*The Girl enters. She is carrying a small book of poems. The men take off their hats.*)

BOYS (*All speaking together*). Hello, teacher!

GIRL. Hello!

(*Sonora crosses to The Girl and hands her a bunch of berries.*)

TRINIDAD. Hello, teacher! (*He hands her an orange.*) From 'Frisco.

HAPPY (*Comes down with a bunch of berries which he gives to The Girl*). Regards!

(*Nick takes off her moccasins.*)

GIRL (*Quietly*). Hello, boys! How's everything?

(*With a guilty look, she glances from one to another, to see if they suspect her.*)

HANDSOME. Bully!

SONORA. Say — we missed you. Never knew you to desert the Polka for a whole week before.

GIRL (*Who has gone up to the desk*). No, I — I ——

(*She lays the berries and the orange on the desk.*)

HAPPY. Academy's opened.

GIRL. Yes . . . I see . . .

(*She takes off her gloves.*)

SONORA. Here's a noo pupil — Bucking Billy from Watson's.

(*Bucking Billy comes forward.*)

GIRL. How do you do, Bucking Billy?

BUCKING BILLY (*Shyly*). How do!

GIRL (*Starting and looking out of the window*). What's that?

NICK. Log fell in the stove.

GIRL. Oh . . . (*Pulling herself together.*) I guess I'm kind of nervous to-day.

(*She exchanges glances with Nick as she takes off her coat and hands it to him.*)

SONORA. No wonder. Road-agent's been in camp . . . and we missed a hangin'. I can't get over that!

GIRL. Well, come on, boys, and let me see your hands. (*Emphatically.*) Let me see them! (*After looking at the outstretched hands.*) Git in there and wash them.

SONORA. Yes'm. Been blackenin' my boots.

(*He points to his boots.*)

GIRL. Yes, and look at them boots — and them boots — and them boots! Git in there, the whole lot of you, and clean up — and leave your whiskey behind. (*The boys go into the lean-to. Untying the strings of her cap, she takes it off and hands it to Nick.*) Have you heard anything? Did he git away safe?

NICK. Yes.

GIRL. I was watchin' an' I seen him go . . . but suppose he don't git through . . . suppose . . .

NICK. He'll git through, sure. We'll hear he's out of this country before you know it.

(*He hangs up The Girl's wraps.*)

(*Rance enters.*)

GIRL. Jack Rance: I want to thank you.

RANCE. Oh, don't thank me that he got away. (*In a low voice.*) It was them three aces and the pair you held.

GIRL (*In confidence*). About them three aces — I want to say —

RANCE. But he better keep out of my country.

(*The Girl and Rance look intently at one another.*)

GIRL. Yes . . .

(*She rings the bell. The boys enter. Rance sits down by the stove, paying no attention to the others. Happy enters, carrying the slates which are in a very bad condition — some have no frames, some have very little slate left — one or two have sponges hanging to the frames on strings, and all have slate-pencils fastened to the frames. Happy gives out the slates as the others march by.*)

HAPPY. Come along, boys — git your slates.

TRINIDAD. Whoop!

GIRL. Trin, you're out of step, there. Git in step, Happy. (*The boys all march forward in the manner of school children. As each one gets his slate, he takes his seat. The Girl sits back of her desk on the platform. With a sickly laugh, trying to take interest in the scholars.*) Now, boys: what books have we left over from last year?

HAPPY (*Rising*). Why, we scared up jest one whole book left — and the name of it is —

SONORA (*Taking the book out of his pocket, and reading the title*). "Old Joe Miller's Jokes."

GIRL. That will do nicely.

SONORA (*Rising*). Now, boys, before we begin, I propose no drawin' of weppings, drinkin' or swearin' in school hours. The conduct of certain members wore on teacher last term. I don't want to mention no names — but I want Handsome and Happy to hear what I'm sayin'. Is that straight?

ALL. You bet it is!

GIRL (*Timidly*). Last year you led off with an openin' address, Jack.

(*She looks at him timidly.*)

ALL. Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Go on, Sheriff!

TRINIDAD. Let her go, Jack.

(*There is a pause. Rance looks at The Girl, then turns away.*)

RANCE. I pass.

GIRL (*Quickly and with anxiety*). Then Sonora?

SONORA (*Embarrassed at being called upon to make a speech*). Oh, hell! I —

ALL. Sh! Sh! Sh! Go on! Go on! Go on!

SONORA (*Abashed*). I didn't mean that, of course. (*As he rises, he shifts his tobacco and unconsciously spits on Bucking Billy's new boots. Bucking Billy moves away.*) I look upon this place as somethin' more than a place to set around an' spit on the stove. I claim they's culture in the air of California — an' we're here to buck up again' it an' hook on.

ALL. Hear! Hear! Hear!

(*Several of the men pound upon the desks enthusiastically.*)

SONORA. With these few remarks, I — I set.

GIRL (*With deep feeling*). Once more we meet together. There's been a lot happened of late that has learned me that — (*Rance turns slightly in his seat. Nick looks at Rance, Rance at The Girl*) perhaps — I don't know so much as I thought I did — and I can't learn you much more. But if you're willin' to take me for what I am, — jest a woman who wants everybody to be all they ought to be, — why I'm willin' to rise up with you, an' help reach out (*Handsome raises his hand.*) an' — What is it, Handsome?

HANDSOME. Whiskey, teacher. I want it so bad! Just one drink 'fore we start.

(*The boys all stand up, raising their hands and calling:* "Teacher." *The Girl puts her fingers in her ears.*)

GIRL. No! . . . And now jest a few words on the subject of not settin' in judgment on the errin' — (*the boys all sit down again*) a subjeck near my heart.

(*The Sidney Duck opens the door. The card is still pinned on his coat.*)

ALL (*At sight of the Sidney Duck*). Git! Git!

(*Sid is about to retreat.*)

GIRL. Boys! Boys! I was jest gittin' to you, Sid, as I promised. Come in.

(*Sid enters.*)

SONORA. What — here? Among gentlemen? Git!

ALL. Eh? What? Git! Git!

TRINIDAD. Why, this fellow's a —

GIRL. I know — I know . . . but of late a man in trouble has been on my mind —

ALL. Eh?

GIRL (*Catching Rance's eye*). Sid — of course, Sid —

ALL. Oh . . .

GIRL. — and I fell to thinkin' of the Prodigal Son — he done better at last, didn't he?

SONORA. I never heard that he was a card sharp.

TRINIDAD. No.

GIRL (*Overcome with guilt — swallowing nervously*). But suppose there was a moment in Sid's life when he felt called upon to find an extra ace. (*There is a slight pause.*) Can't we forgive him? He says he's sorry. Sid?

SID. Oh, yes, Miss, I'm sorry. Course if I 'adn't got caught, things would 'a been different. I'm sorry.

GIRL. Sid, you git your chance. (*The boys mutter. The Girl takes the card off Sid's coat.*) Now go and set down.

(*The Girl sits.*)

(*Happy strikes Sid as he attempts to sit.*)

HAPPY. Git out of here!

GIRL. Happy! Happy! (*Sonora, as Sid passes him, puts out his foot and trips him.*) Sonora!

(*Sid sits on a stool in a corner. Every one moves away as far as possible.*)

TRINIDAD (*Rises*). Say, Girl: you mean to say that honesty ain't the best policy? Supposin' my watch had no works, an' I was to sell it to the Sheriff for one hundred dollars. Would you have much *re*spect for me?

GIRL. If you could do it, I'd have more *re*spect for you than for the Sheriff.

(*The two Indians, Billy Jackrabbit and Wowkle, enter quietly and sit on the bench by the wall under the blackboard. They take no part, but listen stupidly. Wowkle has the papoose on her back.*)

RANCE (*Rising*). Well, being Sheriff, I'm careful about the company I keep. I'll set in the bar. Cheats — (*looking at*

Sid) or road-agents aren't jest in my line. (*He turns and starts to go.*) I walk in the open road, with my head up — (*The Girl looks down*) and my face to the sun; and wherever I've pulled up, you'll remark I've always played square and stood by the cyards.

(*He pauses in the doorway.*)

GIRL (*Sitting*). I know — I know — an' that's the way to travel — in the straight road. But if ever I don't travel that road — or — you —

NICK. You always will, you bet!

ALL. You bet she will! You bet!

GIRL. But if I don't — I hope there'll be some one to lead me back to the right road. Cause remember, Rance: some of us are lucky enough to be born good — others have to be elected.

(*Rance goes out.*)

SONORA (*Touched*). That's eloquence.

(*Sid sobs. Happy takes out a bottle of whiskey and puts it to his lips. The boys all reach for it. The Girl takes the bottle away.*)

GIRL. Give me that and set down. (*The boys sit down obediently. The Girl goes back to her desk, hands the bottle to Nick and sits. Nick puts the bottle on the shelf of the desk.*) Now, if somebody can sing "My Country 'Tis" — Academy's opened. Sonora?

SONORA. No — I can't sing.

(*The boys all try to make each other sing. While they are chaffing each other, Wowkle and Billy Jackrabbit rise and sing.*)

BILLY JACKRABBIT *and* WOWKLE.

"My country,'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing!"

SONORA. Well, if that ain't sarkism!

BILLY JACKRABBIT *and* WOWKLE.

"Land where our fathers died" . . .

SONORA (*Quickly during the pause between the two lines*). You bet they died hard!

INDIANS.

"Land of the Pilgrims' pride,
From every mountain-side
Let freedom ring!"

(*When the song is ended, the Indians sit down again.*)

GIRL. Thank you, Billy and Wowkle. Now, them that can read, read.

TRINIDAD. This is us! Old Joe Miller!

SONORA (*Reading from the book*). "Can Feb-u-ary March? No, but — A-pril May."

GIRL. Now, Trin. (*As Trinidad laboriously reads the ancient joke, Sid who has noticed Bucking Billy's dinner-pail, reaches out with his feet, pulls the pail over to him, helps himself to food and a small flask of whiskey. He pushes the pail back and starts to eat and drink, glancing at the others furtively to see if he has been caught.*) Now, then, boys, we mustn't forget our general infla — information. Trin, who killed Abel?

TRINIDAD (*In a surprised tone — thinking of some local character*). Why, I didn't know he was dead.

GIRL. Bucking Billy: you count up to ten.

BUCKING BILLY (*Rising*). 1, 2, 3, 4 —

SONORA. Pretty good! I didn't think he knowed that much.

BUCKING BILLY. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen — (*Everybody laughs. Bucking Billy suddenly discovers that his pail has been opened.*) Somebody stole my lunch!

SONORA (*Rising*). Who?

BUCKING BILLY. Him!

(*Pointing to Sid.*)

ALL. Put him out! Git out! Put him out!

GIRL. Boys! Boys! (*Sonora, Trinidad and Handsome throw Sid out and return to their seats. The Girl looks out through the window for a moment, then turns and opens a book.*) I will read you a little verse from a book of pomes.

"No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always may be what we might have been."

(*She rests her hand on the desk and breaks down, sobbing quietly. Nick rises and goes to her.*)

SONORA. Why, what's the —

ALL. Why — what's —

GIRL. Nothin' . . . nothin' . . . Only it jest came over me that we mustn't be hard on sinners and . . . (*Breaking down completely.*) Oh, boys . . . I'll be leavin' you soon — how can I do it? How can I do it?

SONORA. What?

TRINIDAD. What did she say?

SONORA. What'd you say? (*Going to her.*) Why, what's the matter?

GIRL (*Raising her head*). Nothin' — nothin' — only I jest remembered I've promised to leave Cloudy soon, an' perhaps we — might never be together again — you an' me an' the Polka. Oh, it took me jest like that — when I seen your dear old faces — your dear, plucky old faces —an' reelized that — (*She drops her head on the desk again.*)

(*Rance enters.*)

SONORA (*After a pause*). What! You leavin' us?

HAPPY. Leavin' us?

NICK (*Softly, that the others do not hear*). Careful, Girl, careful!

GIRL. It's bound to happen soon.

SONORA. Why, I don't quite understand. Great Gilead! We done anythin' to offend you?

GIRL. Oh, no, no!

SONORA. Tired of us? Ain't we got — (*casting about for a word*) style enough for you?

HAPPY (*Rising*). Be you goin' to show them Ridge boys we're petered out an' culture's a dead dog here?

TRINIDAD. Ain't we your boys no more?

SONORA (*With sentiment, looking like a large, fat cherub*). Ain't I your boy? Why, what is it, Girl? Has anybody — tell me — perhaps —

GIRL (*Raising her head and drying her eyes*). We won't say no more about it. Let's forgit it. Only — when I go away — I want to leave the key of my cabin with old Sonora here. And I want you all to come up sometimes, an' to think of me as the Girl who loved you all, an' somewhere is wishin' you

well — an' — I want to think of little Nick here runnin' my bar, an' not givin' the boys too much whiskey.

(*Putting her hand on Nick's shoulder.*)

SONORA. Hold on! They's jest one reason for a girl to leave her home an' friends . . . only one. Some other fellow away from here — that she — she likes better than she does any of us. Is that it?

GIRL (*Raising her head again*). Likes in a different way, — yes.

HAPPY. Well, so help me!

(*Sonora goes sadly back to his seat. The boys form a pathetic picture.*)

TRINIDAD. Sure you ain't makin' a mistake?

GIRL. Mistake? No, no, boys — no mistake. Oh, boys: if you knew — (*She rises, hesitates a moment, then goes to them.*) Trin . . . (*Putting hands on Trinidad's shoulder.*) Ah, Sonora . . .

(*She kisses Sonora on the cheek, turns and exits into the barroom, sobbing.*)

SONORA. Boys, Academy's busted . . .

(*There is a pause.*)

RANCE (*Sitting down in front of the stove*). Ha! Ha! Ha! Well, the right man has come at last. Take your medicine, gentlemen.

SONORA. Rance, who's the man?

RANCE (*Casually*). Oh, — Johnson.

TRINIDAD. Holy —!

SONORA. Great —!

TRINIDAD *and* SONORA. You lie!

(*During the following speeches, some of the boys move the benches and desks back against the walls. Bucking Billy and the Miner leave.*)

RANCE. Ask Nick.

(*Trinidad and Sonora look at Nick.*)

SONORA. Why, you told me I had the first chance.

TRINIDAD. He told me the same thing.

SONORA. Well, for a first class liar!

TRINIDAD. You bet!

SONORA. But Johnson's dead. (*Suddenly, after a short pause.*) He got away . . .

RANCE (*Shaking the ashes from his cigar*). Yes, he got away . . . (*There is a pause as they realize the situation. Sonora comes to Rance, followed by Trinidad and Happy.*)

SONORA. Jack Rance: I call on you, as Sheriff, for Johnson. He was in your county.

HAPPY. You hustle up an' run a bridle through your pinto's teeth, or your boom for re-election's over, you lily-fingered gambler!

TRINIDAD (*Shaking his fist at Rance*). You bet!

RANCE (*Coolly*). Oh — I — don't know as I give a —

TRINIDAD. No talk! We want —

ALL (*Save Rance and Nick*). Johnson!

(*Ashby's voice is heard outside.*)

ASHBY. Boys!

NICK. Why, that's —

RANCE. That's Ashby! Oh, if — (*In his face is the hope of Johnson's capture. To Ashby, who is still outside.*) You've got him?

(*Ashby enters, his face cool, triumphant. He stands near the door. The Deputy hastens out. This entire scene is played easily and naturally — no suggestion of dramatic emphasis.*)

ASHBY. Yes — we've got him!

SONORA. Not —

ASHBY. Johnson.

(*All look at each other with meaning glances. Nick alone is sorry that Johnson is caught.*)

TRINIDAD. Alive?

ASHBY. You bet!

RANCE (*With a short, brutal laugh — the veneer of the gambler disappearing*). Well, I didn't do it. I didn't do it. Now he be damned! (*Johnson enters, his arms bound, pale, but with the courage of a man who is accustomed to risking his life. He is followed by the Deputy.*) There's an end of him. How do you do, Mr. Johnson? I think, Mr. Johnson, about five minutes will do for you.

(*Trinidad takes out his watch.*)

JOHNSON. I think so.

SONORA (*Sarcastically*). So this is the gentleman the Girl loves?

RANCE. That's the gentleman.

(*The Girl's voice is heard outside.*)

GIRL. Nick? Boys? (*Nick holds the door open. The Girl appears on the threshold of the barroom. Ashby steps between The Girl and Johnson, so that The Girl does not see him.*) I forgot . . . it's recess. They can have a drink now.

(*She moves away from the door.*)

JOHNSON. Lock that door, Nick.

(*Nick shuts the door to the bar and locks it.*)

RANCE. Why the hell —

JOHNSON. Please!

SONORA (*Threateningly*). Why, you —

RANCE (*To Sonora*). You keep out of this. I handle the rope — I pick the tree.

SONORA. Then hurry.

TRINIDAD. You bet!

(*Ashby nods in approval.*)

SONORA. Come on.

(*There is a general movement towards the door leading to the trail.*)

RANCE. Deputy?

(*The Deputy comes forward.*)

JOHNSON. One minute . . .

RANCE. Be quick, then.

JOHNSON. It's true . . . I love the Girl.

RANCE (*Brutally*). Well — you won't in a minute. You —

(*He makes a movement to strike him.*)

JOHNSON. Oh, I don't care what you do to me. I'm prepared for death. That's nothing new. The man who travels my path faces death every day — for a drink of water or ten minutes' sleep. You've got me, and I wouldn't care . . . but for the Girl.

TRINIDAD. You've jest got three minutes.

SONORA. Yes.

JOHNSON. I don't want her to know my end. That would be

an awful thought — that I died out there, close at hand. She couldn't stay here after that — she couldn't, boys, she couldn't.

RANCE (*Briefly*). That's understood.

JOHNSON. I'd like her to think that I got away — went East — and changed my way of living. So you jest drag me a long way from here before you . . . and when she grows tired of looking for letters that never come, she will say: "He has forgotten me," and that will be about enough for her to remember. She loved me before she knew what I was . . . and you can't change love in a minute.

RANCE (*Striking him in the face*). Why, you . . .

JOHNSON. I don't blame you! Strike me again — strike me! Hanging is too good for me. Damn me, body and soul — damn me! Why couldn't I have let her pass? Oh, by God, I'm sorry I came her way; but it's too late now — it's too late!

(*He bows his head.*)

(*There is a pause.*)

RANCE. Is that your last word? (*Johnson does not answer.*) That your last word? (*Trinidad snaps his fingers to indicate that time is up.*) Dep.

(*The Deputy comes to Johnson. Rance moves away, but Nick steps to Johnson's side.*)

NICK. Good-by, sir . . .

JOHNSON. Good-by, Nick. You tell the Girl — no, don't say anything.

HAPPY. Come on, you!

(*They start to go.*)

NICK (*His voice trembling*). Boys: when Alliger was hanged, Rance let him see his sweetheart. I think — considerin' as how she ain't goin' to see no more of Mr. Johnson here — an' knowing' the Girl's feelin's, — I think she ought to have a chance to —

ALL. No! No! No!

RANCE. No!

JOHNSON. I've had my chance — inside of ten minutes I'll be

dead, and it will be all your way. Couldn't you let me? I thought I'd have the courage not to ask, but — Oh, couldn't you?

(*Nick goes to the door as though hearing some sound.*)

NICK. Here's the Girl, boys.

RANCE. No!

JOHNSON. All right. Thank you, Nick.

NICK. You must excuse Rance for bein' so small a man as to deny the usual courtesies, but he ain't quite himself.

JOHNSON. Come, boys, come.

(*He starts for the door left. Sonora pushes him back. The Deputy and one of the miners step between Johnson and the door.*)

RANCE. Wait a minute. (*There is a pause. Johnson slowly turns to face Rance.*) I don't know that I'm so small a man as to deny the usual courtesies, since you put it that way. I always have extended them. But we'll hear what you have to say — that's our protection; and it might interest some of us to hear what the Girl will have to say to you, Mr. Johnson. After a week in her cabin, there may be more to know than —

JOHNSON (*In a low voice*). Why, you damned —

(*Nick moves towards Rance.*)

NICK. Rance, you —

(*The boys all look at Rance angrily, showing that they resent his words.*)

SONORA. Now, Rance, you stop that!

RANCE. We'll hear every word he has to say.

SONORA. You bet! He puts up nothin' noo on us.

ASHBY (*Looking at his watch*). Well, boys, you've got him safe — I can't wait. I'm off.

(*He goes off.*)

(*The Girl's voice is heard outside the barroom door.*)

GIRL. Nick? Nick?

NICK. Here's the Girl, boys.

RANCE. Deputy . . . (*He unties Johnson.*) Circle around to the bar, boys. Trin, put a man at that door. Sonora,

put a couple of men at those windows. (*Sonora, Happy, the Deputy and the Gambler go outside. Handsome and Trinidad go into the lean-to. Nick stands at the barroom door.*) Johnson, if you can't think of something pleasant to tell the Girl, lie to her.

JOHNSON. I'll let her think I came back to see her again. She needn't know it's the last time.

(*The Girl's voice is heard outside.*)

GIRL. Nick? Nick?

(*Rance leaves the room. Trinidad, Handsome and Rance can be seen to pass the windows. Johnson steps behind the door. Nick unbars the barroom door and The Girl enters.*)

GIRL. What you got the door barred for, Nick? (*Looking round.*) Where are the boys?

NICK. Well, you see, the boys — the boys — has — has —

GIRL. Has what?

NICK (*As though struck by a bright idea*). Has gone.

GIRL. Gone where?

NICK. Why, to the Palmetter. Oh, say, Girl — (*He crosses over to her and puts his hands on her shoulders.*) I like you. You've been my religion — the bar an' you. You don't never want to leave us. Why, I'd drop dead for you!

GIRL (*Somewhat surprised and touched*). Nick!

(*She goes up to her desk as Johnson knocks on the door left.*)

JOHNSON (*Appearing*). Girl!

(*He holds out his arms to her.*)

GIRL. You? You? Look outside and —

(*Nick closes the door, bars and holds it.*)

JOHNSON. Don't say a word.

GIRL (*In Johnson's arms*). You shouldn't have come back.

JOHNSON. I had to — to say good-by once more.

NICK (*Lying with effort*). It's all right — it's all right. (*During Nick's speech, The Girl draws the curtains.*) The boys — why, the boys — they are good for quite a little bit yet. Don't git nervous. I'll give you warning.

(*Nick steps into the bar.*)

JOHNSON. Don't be afraid, Girl.

GIRL. But you can't go now without being seen.

JOHNSON (*With a smile*). Yes — there's one way out of Cloudy — and I'm going to take it.

GIRL (*Attempting to move from him*). Then go! Go!

JOHNSON. Just remember that I am sorry for the past — and don't forget me.

GIRL. Forgit you? How could —

JOHNSON. I mean . . . till we meet.

GIRL (*Apprehensively*). Did he call?

JOHNSON. No. He will — he'll warn me . . . Don't forget me.

GIRL. Every day that dawns I'll wait for a message from you. I'll feel you wanting me. Every night, I'll say: "To-morrow" — and every to-morrow I'll say: "To-day!" For you've changed the whole world for me. I can't let you go . . . but I must. Dick — Oh, I'm afraid!

(*She hides her head on Johnson's shoulder.*)

JOHNSON. You mustn't be afraid. In a few minutes, I shall be quite free.

GIRL. And you'll make a little home for me where you're goin' — soon — with you? (*She is overcome. Johnson merely nods.*) A strange feelin' has come over me. A feelin' to hold you, to cling to you — not to let you go. Somethin' in my heart says, "Don't let him go."

JOHNSON. Girl, it's been worth life just to know you. You've brought me nearer heaven. You — to love a man like me!

(*He covers his face with his hands, breaks down and sobs.*)

GIRL. Don't say that. Don't! Suppose you was only a road-agent — an' I was a saloon-keeper: we both came out of nothin' an' we met, but, through loving, we're goin' to reach things now — that's us! We had to be lifted up like this, to be saved.

(*Nick enters. As he opens the door, the boys are seen outside, but The Girl has her back to them.*)

NICK. It's all clear now.

(*Nick backs off, closing the door again.*)

JOHNSON. Good-by.

GIRL (*In Johnson's arms*). You act as though we was never goin' to meet again, an' we are, ain't we?

JOHNSON. Why, surely — we are.

GIRL. I want you to think of me here jes' waitin'. You was the first . . . there'll never be any one but you. All that Mother was to Father, *I'm* goin' to be to you. You're the man I'd want settin' across the table, if they was a little kid like I was, playin' under it. I can't say more than that! Only — you — you will — you must get through safe — and, well, think of me here jes' waitin' . . . jes' waitin' . . . jes' waitin' . . .

(*He stands looking at her. After a little pause, she puts her face in his arm and weeps.*)

JOHNSON. Oh, Girl, Girl! That first night I went to your cabin — I saw you kneeling — praying. Say that in your heart again for me — now. Perhaps I believe it — perhaps I don't. I hope I do. I want to. But say it — say it, Girl — just for the luck of it. Say it. (*He kneels at her feet, his head bowed. The Girl prays silently, crossing herself before she begins, and, at the end of the prayer, they embrace. Sonora opens the door quietly.*) God bless you! Good-by . . . Good-by, Girl!

(*Sonora is followed by the rest of the boys, Rance being the last to enter. Johnson, looking over The Girl's shoulder, sees the boys. He kisses her hands affectionately.*)

GIRL. Good-by . . .

JOHNSON. Girl! Girl!

(*He goes off left.*)

GIRL. He's gone — Nick.

(*Sobbing, she makes a movement to follow Johnson, then goes to Nick and sobs in his arms. Suddenly she sees the men.*)

NICK (*Soothingly*). Girl! Girl!

GIRL (*In alarm*). You — you knew . . . You all knew . . . You had him — you had him all the time . . . An' you're goin' to kill him — but you sha'n't! (*Running over to the door left, she throws herself against it — her back to it, then sobs*

convulsively.) No! You sha'n't kill him — you sha'n't — you sha'n't!

SONORA (*Advances*). Girl . . . the boys an' me ain't perhaps reelized jest what Johnson stood for to you, Girl — an', hearin' what you said, an' seein' you prayin' over the cuss —

RANCE. Damned cuss!

SONORA. Yes, the damned cuss, I got an idee maybe God's back of this here game.

GIRL (*With much anxiety*). You're not goin' to pull the rope on him?

RANCE (*To the men*). You mean I am to set him free?

GIRL (*A gleam of hope in her heart*). You set him free?

RANCE. I let him go?

SONORA. That's our verdict, an' we're prepared to back it up.

GIRL. Dick — Dick — you're free! (*She rushes out and her voice is heard outside.*) You're free! You're free!

(*There is a pause. The men stand silently looking at each other.*)

NICK. The Polka won't never be the same, boys — the Girl's gone.

CURTAIN

ACT IV

The boundless prairies of the West.
On the way East, at the dawn of a day about a week later.

"Oh, my beautiful West!
Oh, my California!"

The scene is a great stretch of prairie. In the far background are foothills with here and there a suggestion of a winding trail leading to the West. The foliage is the pale green of sage brush, — the hills the deeper green of pine and hemlock. In the foreground is a little tepee made of two blankets on crossed sticks. The tepee is built against a grass mound and is apparently only a rude shelter for the night. Back of the tent is an old tree stump which stands out distinctly against the horizon. Here and there are little clumps of grass, bushes and small mounds of earth and rocks. A log fire is burning to the left of the tepee, a Mexican saddle lies beside the fire.

As the curtain rises, the stage is in darkness. Johnson is lying on the grass, leaning against his saddle, smoking a cigarette. The Girl is inside the tepee. Gradually the dawn begins to break. As the scene becomes visible, The Girl pushes aside the blanket and appears in the opening.

GIRL. Dick, are you awake?

JOHNSON (*Turning to her*). Another day . . . the dawn is breaking.

GIRL (*Looking towards the unseen hills in the distance*). Another day . . . Look back . . . the foothills are growing fainter — every dawn — farther away. Some night when I am going to sleep, I'll turn — and they won't be there — red and shining. That was the promised land.

JOHNSON (*Rising*). We must look ahead, Girl, not backwards. The promised land is always ahead.

(*A glimmer of the rising sun is seen on the foliage of the foothills.*)

GIRL. Always ahead . . . Yes, it must be. (*She comes out of the tepee and goes up the path.*) Dick: all the people there in Cloudy — how far off they seem now — like shadows in a dream. Only a few days ago, I clasped their hands; I saw their faces — their dear faces! And now they are fading. In this little, little while, I've lost them . . . I've lost them. (*There are tears in her voice.*)

JOHNSON. Through you, all my old life has faded away. *I* have lost that.

GIRL. Look! (*Pointing to the left as she notices the sunrise.*) The dawn is breaking in the East — far away — fair and clear.

JOHNSON. A new day . . . Trust me. (*Stretching out his hands to her.*) Trust me . . . A new life!

GIRL. A new life. (*Putting her hands in his.*) Oh, my mountains — I'm leaving you — Oh, my California, I'm leaving you — Oh, my lovely West — my Sierras! — I'm leaving you! — Oh, my — (*turning to Johnson, going to him and resting in his arms*) — my home.

CURTAIN

THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

Close as was "The Girl of the Golden West" to the affections of Mr. Belasco, "The Return of Peter Grimm" had for him a deeper, a more spiritual significance. For that reason, it perhaps is the most vital play that he has written. All through his life, the psychic had almost a persistent reality for him. Numerous were the incidents — involving life and death — that had been enmeshed in a multitude of unexplainable phenomena and that had shown existing between David Belasco and different members of his family an invisible tie, a subtle guiding influence, a baffling insight that defied the distance which separated him from them. As a boy he had received warnings which, acting upon them, had saved him from disaster. As a man, he was to see visions, hear voices, prophesy events to come. All of this stamped upon him an indelible interest in psychic matters, and made him seek the advice of psychologists and look into the experiences of psychic societies. Out of such soil came "The Return of Peter Grimm" in its profound impressiveness.

In a small brochure, issued by Mr. Belasco at the time of the play's production, he confessed that the serious examination by science of the phenomena of psychic manifestation only emboldened him the more to treat of "death" in "The Return of Peter Grimm." Can the dead return? There was no doubt of it to Mr. Belasco's mind.

"My mother convinced me that the dead come back," he confessed, "by coming to me at the time of her death. One night, after a long, exhausting rehearsal, I went to bed, worn out, in my New York home, and fell at once into a deep sleep. Almost immediately, however, I was awakened and attempted to rise but could not, and was then greatly startled to see my dear mother (whom I knew to be in San Francisco) standing close

by me. As I strove to speak and to sit up, she smiled at me, a loving, reassuring smile, spoke my name — the name she called me in boyhood — 'Davy, Davy, Davy' — then, leaning down, seemed to kiss me; then drew away a little and said: 'Do not grieve. All is well and I am happy': then moved toward the door and vanished."

On the morrow — while rehearsals of "Zaza" were in progress, — news was received of Mrs. Belasco's death, at the very hour of the night preceding, when she had thus appeared to her son. To add further to the poignant incentives which went into the substance of "Peter Grimm", the playwright's daughter, Augusta — in her last illness — spurred him on by her unflagging insistence that the phenomenon was true. It would seem that on the borderland, herself, between life and death, she had premonitions of immortality, for she died June 5, 1911.

The first performance of "The Return of Peter Grimm" took place at the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, January 2, 1911, and did not reach New York until October 18, when it opened at the second Belasco house on Forty-fourth Street, then called the Stuyvesant, a new home whose cornerstone had been laid by the dramatist, Bronson Howard, and Miss Bates, on December 5, 1906. In the meantime, death had come to Mr. Belasco's father also. Stronger than ever did the author of "Peter Grimm" hold to his belief in the conquest over "death" of a deathless reality. This play was very close to him, and though he gave credit on his program for an idea received from Mr. Cecil de Mille, son of his former collaborator, Henry C. de Mille, it was his own manipulation of plot and his own genius in direction that made "the return" part of the drama so convincing.

What problems he faced have been outlined by Mr. Belasco in a paper published in "Representative Plays by American Dramatists" (edited by Montrose J. Moses). From this, the following is extracted. It clearly reveals how multifarious are the considerations confronting a playwright. In this case the very choice of the name "Peter Grimm" was not without foresight. "It suggested (to me) a stubborn old man with a sense of justice — whose spirit *would* return to right a wrong and adjust

his household affairs." So said Mr. Belasco. And he was just as selective in his choice of profession for *Peter;* herein the producer and writer showed a characteristic in common: reverence for detail.

"I gave *Peter* various trades and professions," he confessed, "none of which seemed to suit the part, until I made him . . . a nurseryman who loved his garden and perennials — the flowers that pass away and return season after season."

But these problems were small beside the absorbing one: the materiality of *Peter*'s "return." If the spirit was to be externalized, how should it be differentiated from the actual physical presence of the characters still alive? Mr. Belasco always faces such a situation squarely; he always consults the resources of his lighting plant; he always measures the ultimate effect upon his audience. His genius lies in such solutions. The techniques of stagecraft and of directorship become fused. Mr. Belasco invented his bridge of lights, which gave to the actors in "Peter Grimm" a more natural atmosphere. But, so he said, "instead of throwing a mysterious light on the figure of *Peter*, I decided to reverse the process and put no lights on him. The lights were on the other people — the people still in life, with just enough amber to give them color."

While this would help to differentiate *Peter* from the rest, still there was his *physical* presence, yet he was supposed to be a spirit. Mr. Belasco met the problem in this manner:

> The apparition of the ghost in "Hamlet" and "Macbeth", the spirits who return to haunt "Richard III", and other ghosts of the theatre, convinced me that green lights and dark stages with spot lights would not give the illusion necessary to this play. All other spirits have been visible to some one on the stage, but *Peter* was to be visible to none, save his dog (who wagged his tail as his master returned from the next world), and for only a second to *Frederik*, the nephew. *Peter* was to be in the same room with the members of the household and come into close contact with them. They were to feel his influence without seeing him. He was to move about among them, even appear to touch them, but they were to look past him and above him — never into his face."

Many more difficulties he met with in the evolution of "Peter Grimm", as dwelt upon in "The Theatre Through Its Stage Door."

The deftness with which all this was managed gave to "The Return of Peter Grimm" its spiritual convincingness. It was not his reading of Hyslop and Morton Prince, or his talks with William James that showed him the "trick", although they deepened his interest in personality, and prompted him to accept, for later production, "The Case of Becky", by Edward J. Locke.

At the time of the death of Sir Herbert Tree, July 2, 1917, he was negotiating with Mr. Belasco for the London production of "The Return of Peter Grimm."

THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

"Only one thing really counts — only one thing — love. It is the only thing that tells in the long run: nothing else endures to the end."

CAST

Peter Grimm	David Warfield
Frederik, *his nephew*	John Sainpolis
James Hartman	Thomas Meighan
Andrew MacPherson	Joseph Brennan
Rev. Henry Batholommey	William Boag
Colonel Tom Lawton	John F. Webber
William	Percy Helton
Catherine	Janet Dunbar
Mrs. Batholommey	Marie Bates
Marta	Marie Reichardt
The Clown	Tony Bevan

SYNOPSIS

The scene of the play is laid in the living-room of Peter Grimm's home at Grimm Manor, a small town in New York State, founded by early settlers from Holland.
The first act takes place at eleven o'clock in the morning, on a fine spring day.
The second act passes ten days later, towards the close of a rainy afternoon.
The third act takes place at twenty minutes to twelve on the same night.

NOTE. Mr. Belasco does not intend to advance any theory as to the probability of the return of the main character of this play. For the many, it may be said that he could exist only in the minds of the characters grouped about him — in their subconscious memories. For the few, his presence will embody the theory of the survival of persistent personal energy. This character has, so far as possible, been treated to accord with either thought. The initial idea of the play was first suggested as a dramatic possibility by Mr. Cecil de Mille, to whom Mr. Belasco acknowledges his indebtedness. A conversation with Professor James, of Harvard, and the works of Professor Hyslop, of the American branch of the London Society of Psychical Research, have also aided Mr. Belasco.

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ACT I

The scene shows a comfortable living-room in an old house. The furniture was brought to America by Peter Grimm's ancestors. The Grimms were, for the most part, frugal people, but two or three fine paintings have been inherited by Peter.

A small, old-fashioned piano stands near the open window, a few comfortable chairs, a desk with a hanging lamp above it, and an armchair in front of it, a quaint old fireplace, a Dutch wall clock with weights, a sofa, a hat-rack, and mahogany flower-pot holders, are set about the room; but the most treasured possession is a large family Bible lying on a table. A door leads to a small office occupied by Peter's secretary.

Stairs lead to the sleeping-rooms above. Through the window, hothouses, beds of tulips, and other flowers, shrubs and trees are seen. "Peter Grimm's Botanic Gardens" supply seeds, plants, shrubbery and trees to the wholesale, as well as retail trade, and the view suggests the importance of the industry. An old Dutch windmill, erected by a Colonial ancestor, gives a quaint touch to the picture. Although Peter Grimm is a very wealthy man, he lives as simply as his ancestors.

As the curtain is raised, the room is empty; but Catherine is heard singing in the dining-room. James Hartman, Peter's secretary, opens his door to listen, a small bundle of letters in his hand. He is a well set up young man, rather blunt in his manner, and a trifle careless in his dress. After a pause, he goes back into the office, leaving the door ajar. Presently Catherine enters. In spite of her youth and girlish appearance, she is a good, thrifty housekeeper. She wears a simple summer gown, and carries a bunch of gay tulips and an old silver pitcher, from which she presently pours water into the Harlequin Delft vase on Peter Grimm's desk. She peeps into the office, retreating, with a smile on her lips, as James appears.

CATHERINE. Did I disturb you, James?

JAMES (*On the threshold*). No indeed.

CATHERINE. Do you like your new work?

JAMES. Anything to get back to the gardens, Catherine. I've always done outside work and I prefer it; but I would shovel dirt rather than work for any one else.

CATHERINE (*Amused*). James!

JAMES. It's true. When the train reached the Junction, and a boy presented the passengers with the usual flower and the "compliments of Peter Grimm" — it took me back to the time when that was my job; and when I saw the old sign, "Grimm's Botanic Gardens and Nurseries" — I wanted to jump off the train and run through the grounds. It seemed as though every tulip called "hello" to me.

CATHERINE. Too bad you left college! You had only one more year.

JAMES. Poor Father! He's very much disappointed. Father has worked in the dirt in overalls — a gardener — all his life; and, of course, he over-estimates an education. He's far more intelligent than most of our college professors.

CATHERINE. I understand why you came back. You simply *must* live where things grow, mustn't you, James? So must I. Have you seen our orchids?

JAMES. Orchids are pretty; but they're doing wonderful things with potatoes these days. I'd rather improve the breed of a squash than to have an orchid named after me. Wonderful discovery of Luther Burbank's — creating an edible cactus. Sometimes I feel bitter thinking what I might have done with vegetables, when I was wasting time studying Greek.

CATHERINE (*Changing suddenly*). James: why don't you try to please Uncle Peter Grimm?

JAMES. I do; but he is always asking my opinion, and when I give it, he blows up.

CATHERINE (*Coaxingly*). Don't be quite so blunt. Try to be like one of the family.

JAMES. I'm afraid I shall never be like one of *this* family.

CATHERINE. Why not? I'm no relation at all; and yet —

JAMES (*Making a resolution*). I'll do my best to agree with him. (*Offering his hand.*) It's a promise. (*They shake hands.*)

CATHERINE. Thank you, James.

JAMES (*Still holding her hand*). It's good to be back, Catherine. It's good to see you again.

(*He is still holding her hand when Frederik Grimm enters. He is the son of Peter's dead sister, and has been educated by Peter to carry on his work. He is a graduate of Amsterdam College, Holland, and, in appearance and manner, suggests the foreign student. He has managed to pull through college creditably, making a specialty of botany. Peter has given him the usual trip through Europe, and Frederik has come to his rich uncle to settle down and learn his business. He has been an inmate of the household for a few months. He poses as a most industrious young man, but is, at heart, a shirker.*)

FREDERIK. Where's Uncle?

JAMES. Good-morning, Frederik. Your uncle's watching Father spray the plum trees. The black knot's after them again.

FREDERIK. I can hardly keep my eyes open. Uncle wakes me up every morning at five — creaking down the old stairs. (*Eyeing Catherine admiringly.*) You're looking uncommonly pretty this morning, Kitty. (*Catherine edges away and runs upstairs to her room.*)

FREDERIK. Hartman!

JAMES. Yes?

FREDERIK. Miss Catherine and you and I are no longer children — our positions are altered — please remember that. I'm no longer a student home for the holidays from Amsterdam College. I'm here to learn the business which I am expected to carry on. Miss Catherine is a young lady now, and my uncle looks upon her as his daughter. You are here as my uncle's secretary. That's how we three stand in this house. Don't call me "Frederik", and hereafter be good enough to say, "Miss Grimm."

JAMES (*Amiably*). Very well.

FREDERIK. James: there's a good opportunity for a young

man like you in our Florida house. I think that if I spoke for you —

JAMES. Why do you wish to ship me off to Florida?

FREDERIK. I don't understand you, Hartman. I don't wish to ship you off. I am merely thinking of your future. You seem to have changed since —

JAMES. We've all grown up, as you just said.

(*James has laid some mail on the desk, and is about to leave the room, when Frederik speaks again, but in a more friendly manner.*)

FREDERIK. The old man's aging; do you notice it?

JAMES. Your uncle's mellowing, yes; but that's only to be expected. He's changing foliage with the years.

FREDERIK. He's growing as old-fashioned as his hats. In my opinion, this would be the time to sell.

JAMES (*Astonished*). Sell? Sell a business that has been in his family for — why, it's his religion!

FREDERIK. It's at the height of its prosperity. It would sell like that! (*Snapping his fingers.*) What was the last offer the old man refused from Hicks, of Rochester, Jim?

JAMES (*Noticing the sudden friendliness — looking at Frederik, half-amused, half-disgusted*). Can't repeat correspondence, Mr. Grimm. (*Amazed.*) Good heavens! You surprise me! Would you sell your great, great grandfather? I learned to read by studying his obituary out in the peach orchard: "Johann Grimm, of Holland, an upright settler." There isn't a day your uncle doesn't tell me that you are to carry on the work.

FREDERIK. So I am, but it's not *my* religion. (*Sarcastically.*) Every man can't be blessed like you with the soul of a market gardener — a peddler of turnips.

JAMES (*Thinking — ignoring Frederik*). He's a great old man — your uncle. It's a big name — Grimm — Peter Grimm. The old man knows his business — he certainly knows his business. (*Changing.*) God! It's an awful thought that a man must die and carry all that knowledge of orchids to the grave! I wonder if it doesn't all count somewhere. . . . I must attend to the mail.

(*Peter Grimm enters from the gardens. He is a well-preserved man of sixty, very simple and plain in his ways. He has not changed his style of dress in the past thirty years. His clothing, collar, tie, hat and shoes are all old-fashioned. He is an estimable man, scrupulously honest, gentle and sympathetic; but occasionally he shows a flash of Dutch stubbornness.*)

FREDERIK. I ran over from the office, Uncle Peter, to make a suggestion.

PETER. Yes?

FREDERIK. I suggest that we insert a full-page cut of your new tulip in our mid-summer floral almanac.

PETER (*Who has hung up his hat on his own particular peg, affably assenting*). A good idea!

FREDERIK. The public is expecting it.

PETER. You think so, my boy?

FREDERIK. Why, Uncle, you've no idea of the stir this tulip has created. People stop me in the street to speak of it.

PETER. Well, well, you surprise me. I didn't think it so extraordinary.

FREDERIK. I've had a busy morning, sir, in the packing house.

PETER. That's good. I'm glad to see you taking hold of things, Fritz. (*Humourously, touching Frederik affectionately on the shoulder.*) We mustn't waste time; for that's the stuff life's made of. (*Seriously.*) It's a great comfort to me, Frederik, to know that when I'm in my little private room with James, or when I've slipped out to the hothouses, — you are representing me in the offices — *young* Mr. Grimm. . . . James, are you ready for me?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. I'll attend to the mail in a moment. (*Missing Catherine, he calls according to the household signal.*) Ou — oo! (*He is answered by Catherine, who immediately appears from her room, and comes running downstairs.*) Catherine, I have news for you. I've named the new rose after you: "Katie — a hardy bloomer." It's as red as the ribbon in your hair.

CATHERINE. Thank you, Uncle Peter, thank you very much. And now you must have your cup of coffee.

PETER. What a fine little housewife! A busy girl about the house, eh, Fritz? Is there anything you need to-day, Katie?

CATHERINE. No, Uncle Peter, I have everything I need, thank you.

PETER. Not everything, — not everything, my dear. (*Smiling at Frederik. James, ignored, is standing in the background.*) Wait! Wait till I give you a husband. I have my plans. (*Looking from Frederik to Catherine.*) People don't always know what I'm doing, but I'm a great man for planning. Come, Katie, tell me, on this fine spring morning, what sort of husband would you prefer?

CATHERINE (*Annoyed, — with girlish impatience*). You're always speaking of weddings, Uncle Peter. I don't know what's come over you of late.

PETER. It's nesting time, . . . spring weddings are in the air; besides, my grandmother's linen-chest upstairs must be used again for you (*impulsively drawing Catherine to him*), my house fairy. (*Kisses her.*) There, I mustn't tease her. But I leave it to Fritz if I don't owe her a fine husband — this girl of mine. Look what she has done for *me!*

CATHERINE. Done for you? I do you the great favour to let *you* do everything for *me.*

PETER. Ah, but who lays out my linen? Who puts flowers on my desk every day? Who gets up at dawn to eat breakfast with me? Who sees that I have my second cup of coffee? But better than all that — who brings youth into my old house?

CATHERINE. That's not much — youth.

PETER. No? We'll leave it to Fritz. (*Frederik, amused, listens in silence.*) What should I be now — a rough old fellow — a bachelor — without youth in my house, eh? God knows! Katie has softened me towards all the ladies — er — mellowed me as time has mellowed my old pictures. (*Points to pictures.*) And I was growing hard — hard and fussy.

CATHERINE (*Laughing*). Ah, Uncle Peter, have I made you take a liking to all the rest of the ladies?

PETER. Yes. It's just as it is when you have a pet: you like all that breed. You can only see *your* kind of kitten.

JAMES (*Coming down a step, impressed by Peter's remark — speaking earnestly*). That's so, sir. (*The others are surprised.*) I hadn't thought of it in that way, but it's true. You study a girl for the first time, and presently you notice the same little traits in every one of them. It makes you feel differently towards all the rest.

PETER (*Amused*). Why, James, what do *you* know about girls? "Bachelor" is stamped all over you — you're positively labeled.

JAMES (*Good-naturedly*). Perhaps. (*Goes back to the office.*)

PETER. Poor James! What a life before him! When a bachelor wants to order a three-rib roast, who's to eat it? I never had a proper roast until Katie and Frederik came to make up my family; (*rubbing his hands*) but the roasts are not big enough. (*Giving Frederik a knowing look.*) We must find a husband.

CATHERINE. You promised not to —

PETER. I want to see a long, long table with plenty of young people.

CATHERINE. I'll leave the room, Uncle.

PETER. With myself at the head, carving, carving, carving, watching the plates come back, and back, and back. (*As she is about to go.*) There, there, not another word of this to-day. (*The 'phone rings. James re-enters and answers it.*)

JAMES. Hello! (*Turns.*) Rochester asks for Mr. Peter Grimm to the 'phone. Another message from Hicks' greenhouses.

PETER. Ask them to excuse me.

JAMES (*Bluntly*). You'll have to excuse him. (*Listens.*) No, no, the gardens are not in the market. You're only wasting your time.

PETER. Tc! Tc! James! Can't you say it politely? (*James listens at 'phone.*)

FREDERIK (*Aside to Peter*). James is so painfully blunt. (*Then changing.*) Is it — er — a good offer? Is Hicks willing to

make it worth while? (*Catching his uncle's astonished eye — apologetically.*) Of course, I know you wouldn't think of —

CATHERINE. I should say not! My home? An offer? *Our* gardens? I should say not!

FREDERIK. Mere curiosity on my part, that's all.

PETER. Of course, I understand. Sell out? No indeed. We are thinking of the next generation.

FREDERIK. Certainly, sir.

PETER. We're the last of the family. The business — that's Peter Grimm. It will soon be Frederik Grimm. The love for the old gardens is in our blood.

FREDERIK. It is, sir. (*Lays a fond hand on Peter's shoulder.*)

PETER (*Struck*). I have an idea. We'll print the family history in our new floral almanac.

FREDERIK (*Suppressing a yawn*). Yes, yes, a very good idea.

PETER. Katie, read it to us and let us hear how it sounds.

CATHERINE (*Reads*). "In the spring of 1709 there settled on Quassick Creek, New York State, Johann Grimm, aged twenty-two, husbandman and vine-dresser, also Johanna, his wife."

PETER. Very interesting.

FREDERIK. Very interesting, indeed.

CATHERINE. "To him Queen Anne furnished one square, one rule, one compass, two whipping saws and several small pieces. To him was born —"

PETER (*Interrupting*). You left out two augurs.

CATHERINE (*Reads*). Oh, yes — "and two augurs. To him was born a son —"

PETER (*Who knows the history by heart, has listened, his eyes almost suffused — repeating each word to himself, as she reads. He has lived over each generation down to the present and nods in approval as she reaches this point*). The foundation of our house. And here we are prosperous and flourishing — after seven generations. We'll print it, eh, Fritz?

FREDERIK. Certainly, sir. By all means let us print it.

PETER. And now we are depending upon you, Frederik, for the next line in the book. (*To Catherine — slyly — as she closes*

the book.) If my sister could see Frederik, what a proud mother she would be!

JAMES (*Turning from the 'phone to Peter*). Old man Hicks himself has come to the 'phone. Says he *must* speak to Mr. Peter Grimm.

FREDERIK. I'd make short work of him, Uncle.

PETER (*At the 'phone*). How are you, my old friend? . . . How are your plum trees? (*Listens.*) Bad, eh? Well, we can only pray and use Bordeaux Mixture. . . . No . . . Nonsense! This business has been in my family for seven generations. Why sell? I'll see that it stays in the family seven generations longer! (*Echoing.*) Do I propose to live that long? N — no; but my plans will. (*Looks towards Frederik and Catherine.*) How? Never mind. Good-morning. (*Hangs up the receiver.*)

JAMES. Sorry to disturb you, sir, but some of these letters are —

FREDERIK. I'm off.

PETER (*Who has lifted a pot of tulips to set it in the sun — standing with the pot in his hands*). And remember the saying: (*a twinkle in his upraised eyes*) "Thou, O God, sellest all good things at the price of labour."
(*Smells the tulips and sets them down.*)

FREDERIK (*Goes briskly towards the door*). That's true, sir. I want to speak to you later, Uncle — (*turning, looking at James*) on a private matter. (*He goes off looking at his watch, as though he had a hard day's work before him.*)

PETER (*Looking after Frederik*). Very capable young fellow, Frederik. I was a happy man, James, when I heard that he had won the prize for botany at Amsterdam College. I had to find out the little I know by experience.

JAMES (*Impulsively*). Yes, and I'll wager you've forgotten more than — (*Catching a warning glance from Catherine, he pauses.*)

PETER. What?

JAMES. Nothing, sir. I —

CATHERINE (*Tugging at Peter's coat — speaking to him apart, as James busies himself at the desk*). Uncle Peter, I think you're unfair to James. We used to have him to dinner very

often before he went away. Now that he's back, you treat him like a stranger.

PETER (*Surprised*). Eh? I didn't know that I — (*Petting Catherine.*) A good, unselfish girl. She thinks of everybody. (*Aloud.*) James, will you have dinner with us to-day?

JAMES (*Pleased and surprised*). Thank you, sir — yes, sir.

PETER. It's a roast goose — cooked sweet, James. (*Smacks his lips.*) Fresh green herbs in the dressing and a Figaro pudding. Marta brought over that pudding receipt from Holland.

(*Marta, an old family servant, has entered with the air of having forgotten to wind the clock. She smiles happily at Peter's allusion to her puddings, attends to the old clock, and passes off with Catherine. Peter sits at the desk, glancing over the mail.*)

PETER. Katie's blossoming like a rose. Have you noticed how she's coming out lately, James?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. You've noticed it, too? (*Picks up another letter, looking over it.*)

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER (*Pausing, taking off his eyeglasses and holding them on his thumb. Philosophically*). How prettily Nature accomplishes her will — making a girl doubly beautiful that a young man may yield his freedom the more easily. Wonderful! (*During the following, he glances over letters.*) A young girl is like a violet sheltered under a bush, James; and that is as it should be, isn't it?

JAMES. No, sir, *I* don't think so.

PETER (*Surprised*). What?

JAMES. I believe people should think for themselves — not be . . .

PETER. Go on.

JAMES. — er —

PETER. Well?

JAMES (*Remembering his promise to Catherine*). Nothing.

PETER. Go on, James.

JAMES. I mean swallowed up.

PETER. Swallowed up? Explain yourself, James.

JAMES. I shouldn't have mentioned it.

PETER. Certainly, certainly. Don't be afraid to express an honest opinion.

JAMES. I only meant that you can't shape another's life. We are all free beings and —

PETER. Free? Of course Katie's free — to a certain extent. Do you mean to tell me that any young girl should be freer? Nonsense! She should be happy that *I* am here to think for her — *I! We* must think for people who can't think for themselves; and a young girl can't. (*Signing an answer to a letter after hastily glancing over it.*) You have extraordinary ideas, James.

JAMES. Excuse me, sir; you asked my opinion. I only meant that we can't think for others — any more than we can eat or sleep for them.

PETER (*As though accepting the explanation*). Oh . . . I see what you mean.

JAMES. Of course, every happy being is bound by its nature to lead its own life — that it may be a free being. Evidently I didn't make my meaning clear.
(*Giving Peter another letter to sign.*)

PETER. Free? Happy? James, you talk like an anarchist! You surprise me, sir. Where do you get these extraordinary ideas?

JAMES. By reading modern books and magazines, sir, and of course —

PETER. I thought so. (*Pointing to his books.*) Read Heine. Cultivate sentiment. (*Signing the letter.*) Happy? Has it ever occurred to you that Katie is not happy?

JAMES. No, sir, I can't truthfully say that it has.

PETER. I imagine not. These are the happiest hours of her life. Young . . . in love . . . soon to be married.

JAMES (*After a long pause*). Is it settled, sir?

PETER. No, but I'll soon settle it. Any one can see how she feels towards Frederik.

JAMES (*After a shorter pause*). Isn't she very young to marry, sir?

PETER. Not when she marries into the family; not when *I* am in the house — (*touching his chest*) to guard her — to watch over her. Leave it to *me*. (*Enthusiastically.*) Sit here, James. Take one of Frederik's cigars. (*James politely thanks him, but doesn't take one.*) It's a pleasure to talk to some one who's interested; and you *are* interested, James?

JAMES. Yes, sir, I'm much more interested than you might think.

PETER. Good. We'll take up the mail in a minute. Now, in order to carry out my plans —

CATHERINE (*Sticking her head in the door*). Ready for coffee?

PETER. Er — a little later. Close the door, dear. (*She disappears, closing the door.*) In order to carry out my plans, I have had to use great diplomacy. I made up my mind to keep Katie in the family; being a rich man — everybody knows it — I've had to guard against fortune-hunters. However, I think I've done away with them, for the whole town understands that Katie hasn't a penny — doesn't it, James?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. Yes, I think I've made that very clear. My dream was to bring Catherine up to keep her in the family, and it has been fulfilled. My plans have turned out beautifully, for she is satisfied and happy.

JAMES. But did you want her to be happy simply because *you* are happy, sir? Don't you want her to be happy because *she* is happy?

PETER. If she's happy, why should I care?

(*Picks up the last letter.*)

JAMES. *If* she's happy.

PETER (*Losing his temper*). What do you mean? That's the second time you've said that. Why do you harp on —

JAMES (*Rising*). Excuse me, sir.

PETER (*Angrily*). Sit down. What do you know?

JAMES. Nothing, sir. . . .

PETER. You must know something to speak in this manner.

JAMES. No, I don't. You're a great expert in your line, Mr.

Grimm, and I have the greatest respect for your opinion; but you can't mate people as you'd graft tulips. And more than once, I've — I've caught her crying and I've thought perhaps . . .

PETER (*Pooh-poohing*). Crying? Of course! Was there ever a girl who didn't cry? . . . You amuse me . . . with your ideas of life. . . . Ha! Haven't I asked her why she was crying, — and hasn't she always said: "I don't know why — it's nothing." They love to cry. (*Signs the last letter.*) But that's what they all cry over — nothing. James, do you know how I happened to meet Katie? She was prescribed for me by Doctor MacPherson.

JAMES (*Taking the letter*). Prescribed?

PETER. As an antidote. I was growing to be a fussy bachelor, with queer notions. You are young, but see that you don't need the Doctor, James. Do you know how I was cured? I'll tell you. One day, when I had business in the city, the Doctor went with me, and before I knew what he was at — he had marched me into a home for babies. . . . Katie was nearest the door — the first one. Pinned over her crib was her name: "Catherine Staats, aged three months." She held out her little arms . . . so friendless — so pitiful — so alone — and I was done for. We brought her back home, the Doctor, a nurse and I. The first time I carried her up those stairs — all my fine bachelor's ideas went out of my head. I knew then that my theories were all humbug. I had missed the child in the house who was to teach me everything. I had missed many children in my house. From that day, I watched over her life. (*Rising, pointing towards the head of the stairs.*) James, I was born in this house — in the little room where I sleep; and her children shall one day play in the room in which I was born. . . . That's very pretty, eh? (*Wipes his eyes, sentimentally.*) I've always seen it that way.

JAMES (*Coolly*). Yes; it's *very* pretty if it turns out well.

PETER. How can it turn out otherwise?

JAMES. To me, sir, it's not a question of sentiment — of where her children shall play, so long as they play happily.

PETER. What? Her children can play anywhere — in China if they want to! Are you in your senses? A fine reward for giving a child all your affection — to live to see *her* children playing in China. No, sir! I propose to keep my household together, by your leave. (*Banging his clenched fist on the desk.*) It's my plan. (*Cleans his pipe, looking at James from time to time. James posts the letters in a mail-box outside the door. Peter goes to the window, calling off.*) Otto! Run to the office and tell Mr. Frederik he may come in now. (*The voice of a gruff Dutchman: "Het is pastoor's dag."* [It is the pastor's day.]) Ah, yes; I had forgotten. It's William's day to take flowers to the Pastor. (*A knock is heard and, as Peter calls "Come in," William, a delicate child of eight, stands timidly in the doorway of the dining-room, hat in hand.*) How are you to-day, William?

(*Pats William on the shoulder.*)

WILLIAM. The Doctor says I'm well now.

PETER. Good! Then you shall take flowers to the church. (*Calls off.*) A big armful, Otto!

(*Marta has entered with a neatly folded, clean handkerchief which she tucks into William's breast pocket.*)

PETER (*In a low voice, to James*). There's your example of freedom! William's mother, old Marta's spoiled child, was free. You remember Annamarie, James? — let to come and go as she pleased. God knows where she is now . . . and here is William with the poor old grandmother. . . . Run along with the flowers, William. (*Gives William some pennies as he goes.*) How he shoots up, eh, Marta?

MARTA (*With the hopeless sorrow of the old, as she passes off*). Poor child . . . poor child.

PETER. Give Katie more freedom, eh? Oh, no! I shall guard her as I would guard my own, for she is as dear to me as though she were mine, and, by marriage, please God, she shall be a Grimm in *name*.

JAMES. Mr. Grimm, I — I wish you would transfer me to your branch house in Florida.

PETER. What? You who were so glad to come back! James,

you need a holiday. Close your desk. Go out and busy yourself with those pet vegetables of yours. Change your ideas; then come back sane and sensible, and attend to your work. (*Giving a last shot at James as he passes into the office and Frederik re-enters.*) You don't know what you want!

FREDERIK (*Looking after James*). Uncle Peter, when I came in this morning, I made up my mind to speak to you of James.

PETER. James?

FREDERIK. Yes, I've wondered lately if . . . it seems to me that James is interested in Catherine.

PETER. James? Impossible.

FREDERIK. I'm not so sure.

PETER (*Good-naturedly*). James? James Hartman?

FREDERIK. When I look back and remember him as a barefoot boy living in a shack behind our hot-houses — and see him now — in here with you —

PETER. All the more credit, Frederik.

FREDERIK. Yes; but these are the sort of fellows who dream of getting into the firm. And there are more ways than one.

PETER. Do you mean to say — He wouldn't presume to think of such a thing.

FREDERIK. Oh, wouldn't he! The class to which he belongs presumes to think of anything. I believe he has been making love to Catherine.

PETER (*After a slight pause, goes to the dining-room door and calls*). Katie! Katie!

FREDERIK (*Hastily*). Don't say that I mentioned it.

(*Catherine enters.*)

PETER. Katie, I wish to ask you a question. I — (*He laughs.*) Oh, it's absurd. No, no, never mind.

CATHERINE. What is it?

PETER. I can't ask you. It's really too absurd.

CATHERINE (*Her curiosity aroused*). What is it, Uncle? . . . Tell me . . . tell me . . .

PETER. Has James ever —

CATHERINE (*Taken back and rather frightened — quickly*). No. . . .

PETER. What? . . . How did you know what I . . . (*Frederik gives her a shrewd glance; but Peter, suspecting nothing, continues.*) I meant . . . has James shown any special interest in you?

CATHERINE (*As though accepting the explanation*). Oh . . . (*Flurried.*) Why, Uncle Peter! . . . Uncle Peter! . . . whatever put this notion into your head?

PETER. It's all nonsense, of course, but —

CATHERINE. I've always known James. . . . We went to school together. . . . James has shown no interest he ought not to have shown, Uncle Peter, — if that's what you mean. He has always been very respectful in a perfectly friendly way.

PETER (*Convinced*). Respectful in a perfectly friendly way. (*To Frederik.*) You can't ask more than that. Thank you, dear, that's all I wanted. Run along. (*Glad to escape, Catherine leaves the room.*) He was only respectful in a perfectly friendly way. (*Slaps Frederik on the back.*) You're satisfied now, I hope?

FREDERIK. No, I am not. If *she* hasn't noticed what he has in mind, *I* have. When I came into this room a few moments ago, — it was as plain as day. He's trying to make love to her under our very eyes. I saw him. I wish you would ask him to stay in his office and attend to his own business. (*James now re-enters on his way to the gardens.*)

PETER. James, it has just occurred to me — that — (*James pauses.*) What was your reason for wanting to give up your position? Had it anything to do with my little girl?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. You mean that — you — you love her?

JAMES (*In a low voice*). Yes, sir.

PETER. O-ho!

(*Frederik gives Peter a glance as though to say, "Now, do you believe it?"*)

JAMES. But she doesn't know it, of course; she never would have known it. I never meant to say a word to her. I understand, sir.

PETER. James! Come here . . . here! . . . (*Bringing James*

up before him at the desk.) Get your money at the office. You may have that position in Florida. Good-by, James.

JAMES. I'm very sorry that . . . Good-by, sir.

FREDERIK. You are not to tell her that you're going. You're not to bid her good-by.

PETER (*To Frederik*). Sh! Let me attend to —

JAMES (*Ignoring Frederik*). I'm sorry, Mr. Grimm, that — (*His voice falters.*)

PETER (*Rising*). James, I'm sorry, too. You've grown up here and — Tc! Tc! Good fortune to you — James. Get this notion out of your head, and perhaps one day you'll come back to us. We shall see.

(*Shakes hands with James, who leaves the room too much overcome to speak.*)

DR. MACPHERSON (*Who has entered, saying carelessly to James as he passes him*). Hy're you, Jim? Glad Jim's back. One of the finest lads I ever brought into this world.

(*The Doctor is a man of about Peter's age, but more powerfully built. He has the bent shoulders of the student and his face is exceedingly intellectual. He is the rare type of doctor who forgets to make out his bills. He has a grizzled grey beard, and his hair is touched with grey. He wears silver-rimmed spectacles. His substantial but unpressed clothing is made by the village tailor.*)

PETER. Good-morning, Andrew.

FREDERIK. Good-morning, Doctor.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Casts a quick, professional glance at Peter*). Peter, I've come over to have a serious word with you. Been on my mind all night. (*Brings down a chair and sits opposite Peter.*) I — er — Frederik . . . (*Frederik, who is not a favourite of the Doctor's, takes the hint and leaves the room*). Peter, have you provided for everybody in this house?

PETER. What? Have I —

DR. MACPHERSON. You're a terrible man for planning, Peter; but what have you done? (*Casually.*) Were you to die, — say to-morrow, — how would it be with — (*making a gesture to include the household*) — the rest of them?

PETER. What do you mean? If I were to die to-morrow . . .

DR. MACPHERSON. You won't. Don't worry. Good for a long time yet, but every one must come to it — sooner or later. I mean — what would Katie's position be in this house? I know you've set your heart upon her marrying Frederik, and all that sort of nonsense, but will it work? I've always thought 'twas a pity Frederik wasn't James and James wasn't Frederik.

PETER. What!

DR. MACPHERSON. Oh, it's all very well if she *wants* Frederik, but supposing she does not. Peter, if you mean to do something for her — do it *now*.

PETER. Now? You mean that I — You mean that I might . . . die?

DR. MACPHERSON. All can and do.

PETER (*Studying the doctor's face*). You think . . .

DR. MACPHERSON. The machinery is wearing out, Peter. Thought I should tell you. No cause for apprehension, but —

PETER. Then why tell me?

DR. MACPHERSON. When I cured you of that cold — wet flowerbeds — two days ago, I made a discovery. (*Seeing Catherine enter, he pauses. She is followed by Marta, carrying a tray containing coffee and a plate of waffles.*) Coffee! I told you not to touch coffee, Peter. It's rank poison.

CATHERINE. Wouldn't you like a cup, Doctor?

PETER. Yes, he'll take a cup. He won't prescribe it, but he'll drink it.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Horrified*). And hot waffles between meals!

PETER. Yes, he'll take hot waffles, too. (*Marta goes to get another plate and more waffles, and Catherine follows her.*) Now, Andrew, you can't tell me that I'm sick. I won't have it. Every day we hear of some old boy one hundred years of age who was given up by the doctors at twenty. No, sir! I'm going to live to see children in my house, — Katie's babies creeping on my old floor; playing with my old watch-dog, Toby. I've promised myself a long line of rosy Grimms.

DR. MACPHERSON. My God, Peter! That dog is fifteen years

old now. Do you expect nothing to change in your house? Man, you're a home worshipper. However, I — I see no reason why — (*lying*) you shouldn't reach a ripe old age. (*Markedly, though feigning to treat the subject lightly.*) Er — Peter, I should like to make a compact with you . . . that whoever *does* go first — and you're quite likely to outlive me, — is to come back and let the other fellow know . . . and settle the question. Splendid test between old neighbours — real contribution to science.

PETER. Make a compact to — stuff and nonsense!

DR. MACPHERSON. Don't be too sure of that.

PETER. No, Andrew, no, positively, no. I refuse. Don't count upon *me* for any assistance in your spook tests.

DR. MACPHERSON. And how many times do you think *you've* been a spook yourself? You can't tell me that man is perfect; that he doesn't live more than one life; that the soul doesn't go on and on. Pshaw! The persistent personal energy *must* continue, or what *is* God?

(*Catherine has re-entered with another cup, saucer and plate which she sets on the table, and pours out the coffee.*)

CATHERINE (*Interested*). Were you speaking of — of ghosts, Doctor?

PETER. Yes, he has begun again. (*To Catherine.*) You're just in time to hear it. (*To Dr. MacPherson.*) Andrew, I'll stay behind, contented in *this* life; knowing what I have here on earth, and you shall die and return with your — ha! — persistent personal whatever-it-is, and keep the spook compact. Every time a knock sounds, or a chair squeaks, or the door bangs, I shall say, "Sh! There's the Doctor!"

CATHERINE (*Noticing a book which the Doctor has taken from his pocket, and reading the title*). "Are the Dead Alive?"

DR. MACPHERSON. I'm in earnest, Peter. *I'll* promise and I want *you* to promise, too. Understand that I am not a so-called spiritist. I am merely a seeker after truth.

(*Puts more sugar in his coffee.*)

PETER. That's what they *all* are — seekers after truth. Rubbish! Do you really believe such stuff?

DR. MACPHERSON. I know that the dead are alive. They're here — here — near us — close at hand. (*Peter, in derision, lifts the tablecloth and peeps under the table — then, taking the lid off the sugar-bowl, peers into it.*) Some of the great scientists of the day are of the same opinion.

PETER. Bah! Dreamers! They accomplish nothing in the world. They waste their lives dreaming of the world to come.

DR. MACPHERSON. You can't call Sir Charles Crookes, the inventor of Crookes Tubes, — a waster? Nor Sir Oliver Lodge, the great biologist; nor Curie, the discoverer of radium; nor Doctor Lombroso, the founder of Science of Criminology; nor Doctors Maxwell, de Vesmé, Richet, Professor James, of Harvard, and our own Professor Hyslop. Instead of laughing at ghosts, the scientific men of to-day are trying to lay hold of them. The frauds and cheats are being crowded from the field. Science is only just peeping through the half-opened door which was shut until a few years ago.

PETER. If ever I see a ghost, I shall lay violent hands upon it and take it to the police station. That's the proper place for frauds.

DR. MACPHERSON. I'm sorry, Peter, very sorry, to see that you, like too many others, make a jest of the most important thing in life. Hyslop is right: man will spend millions to discover the North Pole, but not a penny to discover his immortal destiny.

PETER (*Stubbornly*). I don't believe in spook mediums and never shall believe in them.

DR. MACPHERSON. Probably most professional mediums cheat — perhaps every one of them; but some of them are capable of real demonstrations at times.

PETER. Once a swindler, always a swindler. Besides, why can't my old friends come straight back to me and say, "Peter Grimm, here I am!" When they do — if they do — I shall be the first man to take off my hat to them and hold out my hand in welcome.

DR. MACPHERSON. You ask me why? Why can't a telegram travel on a fence instead of on a wire? Your friends *could*

come back to you if you could put yourself in a receptive condition; but if you cannot, you must depend upon a medium — a sensitive.

PETER. A what? (*To Catherine.*) Something new, eh? He has all the names for them. Yesterday it was "apports" — flowers that fell down from nowhere and hit you on the nose. He talks like a medium's parrot. He has only to close his eyes and along comes the parade. Spooks! Spooky spooks! And now he wants me to settle my worldly affairs and join in the procession.

CATHERINE (*Puzzled*). Settle your worldly affairs? What do you mean, Uncle Peter?

PETER (*Evasively*). Just some more of his nonsense. Doctor, you've seen a good many cross to the other world; tell me — did you ever see one of them come back — one?

DR. MACPHERSON. No.

PETER (*Sipping his coffee*). Never have, eh? And never will. Take another cup of poison, Andrew.

(*The Doctor gives his cup to Catherine, who fills it. Peter passes the waffles to the Doctor, at the same time winking at Catherine as the Doctor takes another.*)

DR. MACPHERSON. There was not perhaps the intimate bond between doctor and patients to bring them back. But in my own family, I have known of a case.

PETER (*Apart to Catherine*). He's off again.

CATHERINE (*Eager to listen*). Please don't interrupt, Uncle. I love to hear him tell of —

DR. MACPHERSON. I have known of a return such as you mention. A distant cousin died in London and she was seen almost instantly in New York.

PETER. She must have traveled on a biplane, Andrew.

DR. MACPHERSON. If my voice can be heard from San Francisco over the telephone, why cannot a soul with a God-given force behind it dart over the entire universe? Is Thomas Edison greater than God?

CATHERINE (*Shocked*). Doctor!

DR. MACPHERSON. And they can't tuck it *all* on telepathy.

Telepathy cannot explain the case of a spirit-message giving the contents of a sealed letter known only to the person that died. Here's another interesting case.

PETER. This is better than "Puss in Boots", isn't it, Katie? More — er — flibbertigibberty. Katie always loved fairy stories.

CATHERINE (*Listening eagerly*). Uncle, please.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Ignoring Peter, speaking directly to Catherine, who is all attention*). An officer on the Polar vessel, the *Jeannette*, sent to the Arctic regions by the New York *Herald*, appeared at his wife's bedside. *She* was in Brooklyn — *he* was on the Polar sea. He said to her, "Count." She distinctly heard a ship's bell and the word "Count" again. She had counted six when her husband's voice said, "Six bells — and the *Jeannette* is lost." The ship was really lost at the time she saw the vision.

PETER. A bad dream. "Six bells and the" — Ha! Ha! Spirit messages! Suet pudding has brought me messages from the North Pole, and I receive messages from Kingdom Come after I've eaten a piece of mince pie.

DR. MACPHERSON. There have been seventeen thousand other cases found to be worth investigation by the London Society of Psychical Research.

PETER (*Changing*). Supposing, Andrew, that I did "cross over" — I believe that's what you call dying, — that I *did* want to come back to see how you and the little Katie and Frederik were getting on, how do you think I could manage to do it?

DR. MACPHERSON. When we hypnotize subjects, Peter, our thoughts take possession of them. As we enter their bodies, we take the place of a something that leaves them — a shadow-self. This self can be sent out of the room — even to a long distance. This self leaves us entirely after death on the first, second or third day, or so I believe. This is the force which you would employ to come back to earth — the astral envelope.

PETER. Yes, but what proof have you, Doctor, that I've got an — an astral envelope?

DR. MACPHERSON (*Easily*). De Rochas has actually photographed it by radio-photography.

PETER. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!

DR. MACPHERSON. Mind you — they couldn't *see* it when they photographed it.

PETER. I imagine not. See it? Ho! Ho!

DR. MACPHERSON. It stood a few feet away from the sleeper, and was located by striking at the air and watching for the corresponding portion of the sleeper's body to recoil. By pricking a certain part of this shadow-self with a pin, the cheek of the patient could be made to bleed. The camera was focussed on this part of the shadow-self for fifteen minutes. The result was the profile of a head.

PETER (*After a pause*). . . . You believe that?

DR. MACPHERSON. The experiment has been repeated again and again. Nobody acquainted with the subject denies it now.

PETER. Spook pictures taken by professional mediums! (*Turning away from the table as though he had heard enough.*)

DR. MACPHERSON. De Rochas, who took the pictures of which I speak, is a lawyer of standing; and the room was full of scientists who saw the pictures taken.

PETER. Hypnotized — all of them. Humbug, Andrew!

DR. MACPHERSON. Under these conditions, it is quite impossible to hypnotize a room full of people. Perhaps you think the camera was hypnotized? In similar circumstances, says Lombroso, an unnatural current of cold air went through the room and lowered the thermometer several degrees. Can you hypnotize a thermometer?

CATHERINE (*Impressed*). That's wonderful, Doctor!

PETER. Yes, it's a very pretty fairy story; but it would sound better set to shivery music. (*Sings.*) Tol! Dol! Dol! Dol! (*Rising to get his pipe and tobacco.*) No, sir! I refuse to agree to your compact. You cannot pick the lock of heaven's gate. We don't come back. God did enough for us when he gave us life and strength to work and the work to do. He owes us no explanations. I believe in the old-fashioned paradise with a locked gate. (*He fills his pipe and lights it.*) No bogies for me.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Rising*). Peter, I console myself with the thought that men have scoffed at the laws of gravitation, at vaccination, magnetism, daguerreotypes, steamboats, cars, telephones, wireless telegraphy and lighting by gas. (*Showing feeling.*) I'm *very* much disappointed that you refuse my request.

PETER (*Laying down his pipe on the table*). Since you take it so seriously — here — (*offers his hand*) I'll agree. I know you're an old fool — and I'm another. Now then — (*shakes hands*) it's settled. Whichever one shall go first — (*He bursts into laughter — then controlling himself.*) If I *do* come back, I'll apologize, Andrew.

DR. MACPHERSON. Do you mean it?

PETER. I'll apologize. Wait (*taking the keys from the sideboard*), let us seal the compact in a glass of my famous plum brandy.

DR. MACPHERSON. Good!

PETER (*As he passes off*). We'll drink to spooks.

CATHERINE. You really do believe, Doctor, that the dead can come back, don't you?

DR. MACPHERSON. Of course I do, and why not?

CATHERINE. Do you believe that you could come back here into this room and I could see you?

DR. MACPHERSON. You might not see me; but I could come back to this room.

CATHERINE. Could you talk to me?

DR. MACPHERSON. Yes.

CATHERINE. And could I hear you?

DR. MACPHERSON. I believe so. That's what we're trying to make possible.

(*Catherine, still wondering, passes off with the tray. From the cellar, Peter can be heard singing lustily.*)

PETER. "If you want a bite that's good to eat,
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!)
Try out a goose that's fat and sweet,
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!")

(*During the song, Mrs. Batholommey has given a quick tap on the door and entered. She is about forty years of age. Her faded brown hair is streaked with grey. She wears a plain black alpaca costume.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Agitated*). Good-morning, Doctor. Fortunate that I found you alone.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Dryly*). Hy're you, Mrs. Batholommey?

(*The Rev. Henry Batholommey now enters. He is a man of about forty-five, wearing the frock coat, high waistcoat and square topped hat of a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Hy're, Henry?

(*The Rev. Mr. Batholommey bows. William has returned from his errand and entered the room, — a picture-book under his arm. He sits up by the window, absorbed in the pictures — unnoticed by the others.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Closing the door left open by Peter, shutting out the sound of his voice*). Well, Doctor . . . (*She pauses for a moment to catch her breath and wipe her eyes.*) I suppose you've told him he's got to die.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Eyeing Mrs. Batholommey with disfavour*). Who's got to die?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Why, Mr. Grimm, of course.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Amazed*). Does the whole damned town know it?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Oh!

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Easy, Doctor. You consulted Mr. Grimm's lawyer and *his* wife told *my* wife.

DR. MACPHERSON. He gabbed, eh? Hang the professional man who tells things to his wife.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Doctor!

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*With solicitude*). I greatly grieve to hear that Mr. Grimm has an incurable malady. His heart, I understand.

(*Shakes his head.*)

DR. MACPHERSON. He's not to be told. Is that clear? He may die in twenty minutes — may outlive us all — probably will.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Pointing to Rev. Mr. Batholommey*). It seems to me, Doctor, that if *you* can't do any more, it's *his* turn. It's a wonder you Doctors don't baptize the babies.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. At the last minute, he'll want to make a will — and you know he hasn't made one. He'll want to remember the church and his charities and his friends; and if he dies before he can carry out his intentions, the minister will be blamed as usual. It's not fair.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Sh! Sh! My dear! These private matters —

DR. MACPHERSON. I'll trouble you, Mistress Batholommey, to attend to your own affairs. Did you never hear the story of the lady who flattened her nose — sticking it into other people's business?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Doctor! Doctor! I can't have that!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Let him talk, Henry. No one in this town pays any attention to Dr. MacPherson since he took up with spiritualism.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose!

(*He motions to her to be silent, as Peter, coming up the stairs from the cellar, is heard singing.*)

PETER. "Drop in the fat some apples red,
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!)
Then spread it on a piece of bread,
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!)"

(*He opens the door, carrying a big bottle in his hand; hailing the Batholommeys cheerfully.*) Good-morning, good people. (*He puts the jug on the sideboard and hangs up the key. The Batholommeys look sadly at Peter. Mrs. Batholommey in the foreground tries to smile pleasantly, but can only assume the peculiarly pained expression of a person about to break terrible news.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Rising to the occasion — warmly grasping Peter's hand*). Ah, my dear friend! Many thanks for the flowers William brought us, and the noble cheque you sent

me. We're still enjoying the vegetables you generously provided. I *did* relish the squash.

PETER (*Catching a glimpse of Mrs. Batholommey's gloomy expression*). Anything distressing you this morning, Mrs. Batholommey?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. No, no. . . . I hope *you're* feeling well — er — I don't mean that — I —

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Cheerily*). Of course, she does; and why not, why not, dear friend?

PETER. Will you have a glass of my plum brandy?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Stiffly*). No, thank you. As you know, I belong to the W. C. T. U.

PETER. Pastor?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Tolerantly*). No, thank you. I am also opposed to er —

PETER. We're going to drink to spooks — the Doctor and I.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*With a startled cry*). Oh! (*Lifts her handkerchief to her eyes.*) How can you! And at a time like this. The very idea — *you* of all people!

PETER (*Coming down with two glasses — handing one to the Doctor*). You seem greatly upset, Mrs. Batholommey. Something must have happened.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Nothing, nothing, I assure you. My wife is a trifle nervous to-day. We must all keep up our spirits, Mr. Grimm.

PETER. Of course. Why not? (*Looking at Mrs. Batholommey — struck.*) I know why you're crying. You've been to a church wedding. (*To the Doctor, lifting his glass.*) To astral envelopes, Andrew.

(*They drink.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*With sad resignation*). You were always kind to us, dear Mr. Grimm. There never *was* a kinder, better, sweeter man than you *were*.

PETER. Than *I was?*

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose, my dear!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. What *will* become of William?

(*Weeps.*)

PETER. William? Why should you worry over William? I am looking after him. I don't understand —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Seeing that she has gone too far*). I only meant — It's too bad he had such an M —

PETER. An M—?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*In pantomime — mouthing the word so that William cannot hear*). Mother . . . Annamarie.

PETER. Oh! . . .

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. She ought to have told you or Mr. Batholommey who the F — was.

PETER. F —?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*In pantomime — as before*). Father.

PETER. Oh. . . . (*Spelling out the word.*) S-c-o-u-n-d-r-e-l — whoever he is! (*Calls.*) William. (*William looks up from his book.*) You're very contented here with me, are you not?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir.

PETER. And you want to stay here?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir. (*At that moment, a country circus band — playing a typical parade march — blares out as it comes up some distant street.*) There's a circus in town.

PETER. A circus?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir. The parade has started. (*Opens the window and looks out towards left.*) Here it comes —

PETER (*Hurrying to the door*). Where? Where?

WILLIAM (*Pointing*). There!

PETER (*As delighted as William*). You're right. It's coming this way! Here come the chariots.

(*Gestures to the Batholommeys to join him at the window. The music comes nearer and nearer — the parade is supposed to be passing. William gives a cry of delight as a clown appears at the window with handbills under his arm.*)

THE CLOWN (*As he throws the handbills into the room*). Billy Miller's big show and monster circus is in town this afternoon. Only one ring. No confusion. (*Seeing William.*) Circus day comes but once a year, little sir. Come early and see the wild animals and hear the lions roar-r-r! Mind! (*Hold-*

ing up his finger to William.) I shall expect to see *you*. Wonderful troupe of trained mice in the side show.

(*Sings.*)

"Uncle Rat has gone to town,
Ha! H'm!
Uncle Rat has gone to town
To buy Miss Mouse a —"

(*Ends the song abruptly.*) Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

(*The Clown disappears, repeating "Billy Miller's Big Show," &c., until his voice is lost and the voices of shouting children are heard as they run after him.*)

PETER (*Putting his hand in his pocket*). We'll go. You may buy the tickets, William — two front seats.

(*Frederik re-enters with a floral catalogue.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Apart to Rev. Mr. Batholommey — looking at Peter*). Somebody ought to tell him.

WILLIAM (*Getting the money from Peter*). I'm going! I'm going! (*Dances.*) Oh, Mr. Grimm, there ain't any one else like you in the world. When the *other boys* laugh at your funny old hat, *I* never do.

(*Pointing to Peter's hat on the peg.*)

PETER. My hat? They laugh at my hat?

WILLIAM. We'll have such a good time at the circus. It's too bad you've got to die, Mr. Grimm.

(*There is a pause. Peter stops short, looking at William. The others are startled, but stand motionless, watching the effect of William's revelation. Frederik doesn't know what to make of it. There is an ominous silence in the room. Then Mrs. Batholommey, whose smile has been frozen on her face, takes William's hand and is about to draw him away, when Peter lays his hand on William's shoulder. Mrs. Batholommey steps back.*)

PETER (*Kindly*). Yes, William, most people have to. . . . What made you think of it just then?

WILLIAM (*Points to the Doctor*). He said so. Perhaps in twenty minutes.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Quietly but very sternly*). William!

(*William now understands that he should not have repeated what he heard.*)

PETER. Don't frighten the boy. Only children tell the truth. Tell me, William — you heard the Doctor say that? (*William is silent. He keeps his eyes on the clergyman who is looking at him warningly. The tears run down his cheeks — he puts his fingers to his lips — afraid to speak.*) Don't be frightened. You heard the Doctor say that?

WILLIAM (*His voice trembling*). Y — es, sir.

PETER (*Looks round the room — beginning to understand*). . . . What did you mean, Andrew?

DR. MACPHERSON. I'll tell you, Peter, when we're alone.

PETER. But . . . (*Mrs. Batholommey shakes her finger threateningly at William who whimpers.*) Never mind. It popped out, didn't it, William? Get the circus tickets and we'll have a fine time just the same.

(*William goes for the tickets.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I — er — good-morning, dear friend. (*Takes Peter's hand.*) Any time you 'phone for me — day or night — I'll run over instantly. God bless you, sir. I've never come to you for any worthy charity and been turned away — never.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Suddenly overcome*). Good-by, Mr. Grimm.

(*In tears, she follows her husband. The Doctor and Peter look at each other.*)

DR. MACPHERSON (*Cigar in mouth — very abruptly*). It's cardiac valvular — a little valve — (*tapping heart*) — here. (*Slaps Peter on the shoulder.*) There's my 'phone. (*As a bell is heard faintly but persistently ringing across the street.*) I'll be back.

(*Catches up his hat to hasten off.*)

PETER. Just a minute.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Turning*). Don't fret yourself, Peter. You're not to imagine you're worse than you are. (*Angrily.*) Don't funk!

PETER (*Calmly*). That wasn't my reason for detaining you,

Andrew. (*With a twinkle in his eye.*) I merely wanted to say —

DR. MACPHERSON. Yes?

PETER. That if there is anything in that ghost business of yours, I won't forget to come back and apologize for my want of faith. (*The Doctor goes home. Frederik stands looking at his uncle. There is a long pause. Peter throws up both hands.*) Rubbish! Doctors are very often wrong. It's all guess work, eh, Fritz?

FREDERIK (*Thinking of his future in case of Peter's death.*) Yes, sir.

PETER. However, to be on the safe side, I'll take that nip of plum brandy. (*Then thinking aloud.*) Not yet . . . Not yet . . . I'm not ready to die yet. I have so much to live for. . . . When I'm older . . . When I'm a little old leaf ready to curl up, eh, Fritz? (*He drains the glass. Goes up to the peg, takes down his hat, looks at it as though remembering William's words, then puts it back on the peg. He shows no sign of taking Dr. MacPherson's verdict to heart — in fact, he doesn't believe it.*) Frederik, get me some small change for the circus — enough for William and me.

FREDERIK. Are you going . . . after all? . . . And with that child?

PETER. Why not?

FREDERIK (*Suddenly showing feeling*). That little tattler? A child that listens to everything and just told you . . . He shouldn't be allowed in this part of the house. He should be sent away.

PETER (*Astonished*). Why do you dislike him, Frederik? He's a fine little fellow. You surprise me, my boy . . . (*Catherine enters and goes to the piano, running her hands softly over the keys — playing no melody in particular. Peter sits in his big chair at the table and picks up his pipe. Frederik, with an inscrutable face, now strikes a match and holds it to his uncle's pipe. Peter thoughtfully takes one or two puffs; then speaking so as not to be heard by Catherine.*) Frederik, I want to think that after I'm gone, everything will be the same here . . . just as it is now.

FREDERIK. Yes, sir.

(*Sitting near Peter.*)

PETER. Just as it is . . .

(*Frederik nods assent. Peter smokes. The room is very cheerful. The bright midday sunshine creeps through the windows, — almost causing a haze in the room — and resting on the pots and vases and bright flowers on the tables.*)

CATHERINE (*Singing*). "The bird so free in the heavens" —

PETER (*Looking up — still in thought — seeming not to hear the song*). And my charities attended to.

(*Frederik nods assent.*)

CATHERINE. "Is but the slave of the nest;
For all must toil as God wills it, —
Must laugh and toil and rest."

PETER (*Who has been thinking*). Just as though I were here.

CATHERINE. "The rose must blow in the garden" —

PETER. William, too. Don't forget *him*, Frederik.

FREDERIK. No, Uncle.

CATHERINE. "The bee must gather its store;
The cat must watch the mouse-hole;
The dog must guard the door."

PETER (*As though he had a weight off his mind*). We won't speak of this again. It's understood.

(*Smokes, listening with pleasure as Catherine finishes the song.*)

CATHERINE (*Repeats the chorus*).

"The cat must watch the mouse-hole;
The dog must guard the door.
La la, La la," *&c.*

(*At the close of the song, Peter puts down his pipe and beckons to Catherine.*)

PETER. Give me the Book.

(*Catherine brings the Bible to Peter as the garden bell rings outside.*)

FREDERIK. Noon.

PETER (*Opening the Book at the history of the family — points to the closely written page*). Under my name I want to see this written: "Married: Catherine and Frederik." I want to see you settled, Katie — (*smiling*) settled happily for life.

(*He takes her hand and draws Frederik towards his chair. Catherine, embarrassed, plays with a rose in her belt.*) Will you? . . .

CATHERINE. I . . . I don't know. . . .

PETER (*Taking the rose and her hand in his own*). *I* know for you, my dear. Make me happy.

CATHERINE. There's nothing I wouldn't do to make *you* happy, Uncle, but —

FREDERIK. You know that I love you, Kitty.

PETER. Yes, yes, yes. *That's* all understood. He has always loved you. Everybody knows it.

CATHERINE. Uncle . . .

PETER. Make it a June wedding. We have ten days yet. (*Slipping her hand in Frederik's, taking the rose, and tapping their clasped hands with the flower as he speaks.*)

FREDERIK. Say yes, Kitty.

CATHERINE (*Nervously*). I couldn't in ten days. . . .

FREDERIK. But —

PETER (*To Frederik*). Who is arranging the marriage, you or I? Say a month, then, Katie. . . . Promise me.

CATHERINE (*Her lips set*). If you have set your heart on it, I will, Uncle Peter . . . I will . . . I promise.

PETER (*Takes a ring off his hand*). The wedding ring — my dear mother's. (*Gives it to Catherine.*) You've made me very happy, my dear.

(*He kisses Catherine. Then, releasing her, he nods to Frederik to follow his example. Peter turns his back on the young people and smokes.*)

FREDERIK. Catherine . . .

(*Dreading his embrace, she retreats towards Peter and, as she touches him, his pipe falls to the floor. She looks at him, startled. Frederik, struck, looking intently at Peter who sits motionless.*)

CATHERINE. Uncle Peter . . . Uncle! What is it? What's the matter? (*Runs to the door — calling across the street.*) Doctor! There he is — just going out. (*Calls.*) Come back. Come back, Doctor. (*To Frederik.*) I felt it. I felt something strange a minute ago. I felt it.

FREDERIK (*Taking Peter's hand*). Uncle Peter!

CATHERINE (*Coming back to Peter and looking at him transfixed*). Uncle Peter! Answer me! . . . It's Katie!

(*The Doctor enters hurridly.*)

DR. MACPHERSON. Is it . . . Peter?

(*He goes quickly to Peter and listens to his heart. Catherine and Frederik on either side of him. The Doctor with tender sympathy takes Catherine in his arms.*)

WILLIAM (*Rushes in with two tickets in his hand, leaving the door open. The circus music is faintly heard*). Mr. Grimm!

DR. MACPHERSON. Sh! (*A pause as though breaking the news to them all.*) He's gone.

FREDERIK (*Questioningly — dazed*). Dead?

(*Catherine is overcome.*)

WILLIAM (*At Peter's side — holding up the circus ticket*). He can't be dead . . . I've got his ticket to the circus.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE. *The second act takes place ten days later, towards the close of a rainy afternoon. A fire is burning in the grate and a basket of hickory wood stands beside the hearth. Peter's hat is no longer on the peg. His pipes and jar of tobacco are missing. A number of wedding presents are set on a table, some unopened. The interior of the room, with its snapping fire, forms a pleasant contrast to the gloomy exterior. The day is fading into dusk. Mrs. Batholommey is at the piano, playing the wedding march from "Lohengrin." Four little girls are grouped about her, singing the words to the air.*

"Faithful and true:
We lead ye forth,
Where love triumphant
Shall lighten the way.

"Bright star of love,
Flower of the earth,
Shine on ye both
On Love's perfect day."

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. That's better. Children, remember that this is to be a very *quiet* wedding. You're to be here at noon to-morrow. You're not to speak as you enter the room and take your places near the piano. Miss Staats will come down from her room, — at least I suppose she will — and will stand . . . (*thinks*) I don't know where — but you're to stop when *I* look at you. Watch me as though I were about to be married. (*She takes her place at the foot of the stairs and the children repeat the song until she has marched across the room and stationed herself in some appropriate corner. As Frederik appears from the hall, where he leaves his raincoat and umbrella, Mrs. Batholommey motions the children to silence.*) That will do, dears, thank you. Hurry home between showers. (*The children go as she explains to Frederik.*) My Sunday-school scholars. . . . I thought your dear uncle would like a song at the wedding. I know how bright and cheery he would have been — poor man. Dear, noble, charitable soul!

FREDERIK (*In a low voice*). Where's Catherine?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Taking up her fancy work, seating herself*). Upstairs.

FREDERIK. With that sick child? Tc!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Catherine finds it a pleasure to sit beside the little fellow. William is very much better.

FREDERIK (*Taking a telegram from his pocket-book*). Well, we shall soon be off to Europe. I've just had a telegram to say a cabin has been reserved for me on the *Imperator*. To-morrow, thank God, we shall take the afternoon train to New York.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I must confess that I'm very glad. Of course, I'm happy to stay and chaperone Catherine; but poor Mr. Batholommey has been alone at the parsonage for ten days . . . ever since your dear uncle . . . (*Pauses, unwinding yarn, then unburdening her mind.*) I didn't think at first that Catherine could persuade herself to marry you.

FREDERIK (*Sharply*). I don't understand you, Mrs. Batholommey.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I mean she seemed so averse to — to an immediate marriage; but of course it was your uncle's last request, and that influenced her more than anything else. So it's to be a June wedding, after all; he has his wish. You'll be married in ten days from the time he left us. (*Remembering.*) Some more letters marked personal came for him while you were out. I put them in the drawer — (*points to desk*) with the rest. It seems odd to think the postman brings your uncle's letters regularly, yet *he* is not here.

FREDERIK (*Looking towards the door of the office*). Did Hartman come?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Yes. He seemed rather surprised that you'd sent for him.

FREDERIK. Did you — er — tell him that we intend to leave to-morrow?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I spoke of your wedding trip, — yes.

FREDERIK. Did he seem inclined to stay?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He didn't say. He seemed very much agitated. (*Marta enters, carrying a night lamp.*) We'll pack Miss Catherine's things to-night, Marta. (*She notices the lamp.*) The night lamp for William? (*Looks up towards the door of his room.*) Go in very quietly. He's asleep, I think. (*Marta goes up the stairs and into William's room.*) By the way, Mr. Batholommey was very much excited when he heard that your uncle had left a personal memorandum concerning *us*. We're anxious to hear it read. (*Frederik, paying no attention to her words, is glancing at the wedding presents.*) We're anxious to hear it read.

JAMES (*Entering*). Did you wish to see me?

FREDERIK (*Offering his hand to James*). How do you do, Hartman? I'm very glad you consented to come back. My uncle never went into his office again after you left. There is some private correspondence concerning matters of which I know nothing; it lies on your old desk. . . . I'm anxious to settle everything to-night.

(*Mrs. Batholommey leaves the room.*)

JAMES. Very well. I have no doubt but that I can get through with it by midnight.

FREDERIK. If you care to remain longer with the firm, I — er —

JAMES. No, thank you.

FREDERIK. I appreciate the fact that you came on my uncle's account. I have no ill-feeling against you, Hartman.

JAMES. I'm not refusing to stay because of any ill-feeling. I'm going because I know that you'll sell out before your uncle's cold in his grave. I don't care to stay to see the old place change hands.

FREDERIK. I? Sell out? My intention is to carry out every wish of my dear old uncle's.

JAMES. I hope so. I haven't forgotten that you wanted him to sell out to Hicks of Rochester on the very day he died.

(*Exit into the office.*)

(*Catherine comes from William's room, simply dressed in white — no touch of mourning. Frederik goes to the foot of the stairs and calls softly.*)

FREDERIK. Kitty! Here is our marriage license. I have the cabin on the *Imperator*. Everything is arranged.

CATHERINE (*Coming downstairs*). Yes. . . . I meant to speak to you — again.

FREDERIK. To-morrow's the day, dear.

CATHERINE (*Very subdued*). Yes. . . .

FREDERIK. A June wedding — just as Uncle Peter wished.

CATHERINE (*As before*). Yes . . . Just as he wished. *Everything* is just as he . . . (*With a change of manner — earnestly — looking at Frederik.*) Frederik, I don't want to go away. I don't want to go to Europe. If only I could stay quietly

here in — (*tears in her voice as she looks around the room*) — in my dear home.

FREDERIK. Why do you want to stay in this old cottage — with its candles and lamps and shadows? It's very gloomy, very depressing.

CATHERINE. I don't want to leave this house. . . . I don't want any home but this. (*Panic-stricken.*) Don't take me away, Frederik. I know you've never really liked it at Grimm Manor. Are you sure you'll want to come back to live here?

FREDERIK (*As though speaking to a child*). Of course. I'll do anything you ask.

CATHERINE. I — I've always wanted to please . . . (*after a slight pause, finding it difficult to speak his name*) Uncle Peter. . . . I felt that I owed everything to him. . . . If he had lived . . . if I could see *his* happiness at our marriage — it would make *me* happy; (*pathetically*) but he's gone . . . and . . . I'm afraid we're making a mistake. I don't feel towards you as I ought, Frederik. I've told you again and again; but I want to tell you once more: I'm willing to marry you . . . but I don't love you — I never shall.

FREDERIK. How do you know?

CATHERINE. I know . . . I know. . . . It seems so disloyal to speak like this after I promised *him;* but —

FREDERIK. Yes, you *did* promise Uncle Peter you'd marry me, didn't you?

CATHERINE. Yes.

FREDERIK. And he died believing you?

CATHERINE. Yes.

FREDERIK. Then it all comes to this: are you going to live up to your promise?

CATHERINE. That's it. That's what makes me try to live up to it. (*Wiping her eyes.*) But you know how I feel. . . . You understand. . . .

FREDERIK. Perfectly; you don't quite know your own mind. . . . Very few young girls do, I suppose. I love you and in time you'll grow to care for me. (*Marta re-enters from Wil-*

liam's room and closing the door comes down the stairs and passes off.) What *are* we to do with that child?

CATHERINE. He's to stay here, of course.

FREDERIK. The child should be sent to some institution. What claim has he on you — on any of us?

CATHERINE. Why do you dislike him?

FREDERIK. I don't, but —

CATHERINE. Yes, you do. I can't understand it. I remember how angry you were when you came back from college and found him living here. You never mention his mother's name, yet you played together as children. When Uncle tried to find Annamarie and bring her back, you were the only one opposed to it.

FREDERIK. William is an uncomfortable child to have in the house. He has a way of staring at people as though he had a perpetual question on his lips. It's most annoying.

CATHERINE. What question?

FREDERIK. As for his mother — I've never seen her since she left this house and I don't care to hear her name on your lips. Her reputation is — (*The rain starts pattering on the shingled roof.*) Tc! More rain . . . the third day of it. . . . (*Going to the window — calling.*) Otto! (*Angrily.*) Otto! See what the wind has done — those trellises. (*Bangs the window shut.*) That old gardener should have been laid off years ago. . . . By the way, his son James is here for a few hours — to straighten matters out. I must see how he's getting on. (*Taking her hand, drawing her towards the table with a change of manner.*) Have you seen all the wedding presents, Kitty? I'll be back in a few minutes.

(*Pats her cheek and exits.*)

(*Catherine stands over her wedding presents just as he left her — not looking at them — her eyes filled with tears. The door is suddenly opened and the Doctor enters, a tweed shawl over his shoulders, wearing a tweed cap. He has a book under his arm.*)

DR. MACPHERSON. How's William? (*Catherine tries to hide her tears, but he sees through her. He tosses his cap, coat and book on the sofa.*) What's the matter?

CATHERINE. Nothing. . . . I was only thinking. . . . I was hoping that those we love . . . and lose . . . *can't* see us here. I'm beginning to believe there's not much happiness in *this* world.

DR. MACPHERSON. Why, you little snip. I've a notion to spank you. Talking like that with life before you! Read this book, child; (*gesturing towards the book on the sofa*) it proves that the dead *do* see us; they *do* come back. (*Walks to the foot of the stairs — turns.*) Catherine, I understand that you've not a penny to your name — unless you marry Frederik; that he has inherited you along with the orchids and tulips. Don't let that influence you. If Peter's plans bind you — and you look as though they did — my door's open. Think it over. It's not too late. (*Goes half-way up the stairs — then pauses.*) Don't let the neighbours' opinions and a few silver spoons — (*pointing to the wedding presents*) stand in the way of your future.

(*Exit into William's room. The rain increases. The sky grows blacker — the room darker. Catherine gives a cry and stretches out her arms, not looking up.*)

CATHERINE. Uncle Peter! Uncle Peter! Why did you do it? Why did you ask it? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! If you could see me now. (*She stands rigid — her arms outstretched. Marta, who has silently entered from the dining-room with fresh candles, goes to Catherine. Catherine suddenly buries her face on Marta's broad breast, breaking into sobs; then recovering, wipes her eyes.*) There, there . . . I mustn't cry . . . others have troubles, too, haven't they?

MARTA. Others have troubles, too.

CATHERINE. I had hoped, Marta, that Annamarie would have heard of Uncle's loss and come back to us at this time. . . .

MARTA. If it had only brought us all together once more; but no message . . . nothing . . . I cannot understand.

CATHERINE. She knows that our door is open. . . .

(*The rain beats against the windows. A sharp double knock is heard at the door. Catherine starts as though suddenly brought to*

herself, hastily goes into the next room, taking the Doctor's book with her. Marta has hurried towards the front door, when the Rev. Mr. Batholommey and Colonel Lawton appear in the hall as though they had entered quickly, to escape the storm. Marta, greeting them, passes off to tell Frederik of their presence. The Rev. Mr. Batholommey wears a long, black cloth, rain-proof coat. Colonel Lawton wears a rubber poncho. Colonel Lawton is a tall man with a thin brown beard and moustache, about forty-eight. He is dressed in a Prince Albert coat, unpressed trousers, and a negligée shirt. He wears spectacles and has a way of throwing back his head and peering at people before answering them. The Rev. Mr. Batholommey sets his umbrella in the hall and the Colonel hangs his broad-brimmed hat on the handle — as though to let it drip.)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Brr! I believe it's raining icicles.

COLONEL LAWTON (*Taking off his overshoes*). Gee Whillikins! What a day! Good thing the old windmill out yonder is tied up. Great weather for baptisms, Parson. (*There is a faint, far-away rumble of thunder. Frederik enters.*) Well, here we are, Frederik, my boy — at the time you mentioned.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. How are you, Frederik?

(*Colonel Lawton crosses to the fire, followed by the Rev. Mr. Batholommey.*)

FREDERIK (*Who has gone to the desk for a paper lying under a paper-weight*). I sent for you to hear a memorandum left by my uncle. I only came across it yesterday.

(*There is a louder peal of thunder. A flash of lightning illuminates the room.*)

COLONEL LAWTON. I must have drawn up ten wills for the old gentleman, but he always tore 'em up. May I have a drink of his plum brandy, Frederik?

FREDERIK. Help yourself. Pastor?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Er — er —

(*Colonel Lawton goes to the sideboard and pours out two drinks from a decanter. A heavy roll of thunder now ends in a sharp thunderclap. Mrs. Batholommey, who is entering the room, gives a cry and puts her hands over her face. Colonel Lawton*

bolts his whiskey. The Rev. Mr. Batholommey takes a glass and stands with it in his hand.)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Removing her hands in time to see the brandy*). Why, Henry! What are you doing? Are your feet wet?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. No, Rose; they're not. I want a drink and I'm going to take it. It's a bad night.

(*Drinks.*)

COLONEL LAWTON (*Throws a hickory log on the fire, which presently blazes up, making the room much lighter*). Go ahead, Frederik.

(*Sits.*)

(*Rev. Mr. Batholommey has drawn up a chair for his wife, and now seats himself before the snapping hickory fire.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I knew that your uncle would remember his friends and his charities. He was so liberal! One might say of him that he was the very soul of generosity. He gave in such a free-handed, princely fashion.

FREDERIK (*Reading in a businesslike manner*). For Mrs. Batholommey —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. The dear man — to think that he remembered me! I knew he'd remember the church and Mr. Batholommey, of course; but to think that he'd remember me! He knew that my income was very limited. He was so thoughtful! His purse was always open.

FREDERIK (*Eyes Mrs. Batholommey for a second, then continues*). For Mr. Batholommey — (*Rev. Mr. Batholommey nods solemnly*) and the Colonel.

COLONEL LAWTON (*Taking out a cigar*). He knew that I did the best I could for him . . . (*his voice breaks*) the grand old man. (*Recovering.*) What'd he leave me? Mrs. B. — er? (*Nods inquiringly at Mrs. Batholommey, who bows assent, and he lights his cigar.*)

FREDERIK (*Glancing at the paper*). Mrs. Batholommey, he wished you to have his miniature — with his affectionate regards.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Dear old gentleman — and er — yes?

FREDERIK. To Mr. Batholommey —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. But — er — you didn't finish with me.

FREDERIK. You're finished.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I'm finished?

FREDERIK. You may read it yourself if you like.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. No, no, no. She'll take your word for it. (*Firmly.*) Rose!

FREDERIK (*Reads*). "To Mr. Batholommey, my antique watch-fob — with my profound respects." (*Continues.*) To Colonel Lawton —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. His watch fob? Is *that* what he left to *Henry?* Is that all? (*As Frederik nods.*) Well! If he had no wish to make *your* life easier, Henry, he should at least have left something for the church. Oh! Won't the congregation have a crow to pick with you!

FREDERIK (*Reading*). "To my life-long friend, Colonel Lawton, I leave my most cherished possession."

(*Colonel Lawton has a look on his face as though he were saying, "Ah! I'll get something worth while."*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Angrily*). When the church members hear that —

COLONEL LAWTON (*Chewing his cigar*). I don't know why he was called upon to leave anything to the church — he gave it thousands; and only last month, he put in chimes. As *I* look at it, he wished to give you something he had *used* — something personal. Perhaps the miniature and the fob *ain't* worth three whoops in hell, — it's the sentiment of the thing that counts — (*chewing the word with his cigar*) the sentiment. Drive on, Fred.

FREDERIK. "To Colonel Lawton, my father's prayer-book."

COLONEL LAWTON (*Suddenly changing — dazed*). His prayer-book . . . me?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Seeing Frederik lay down the paper and rise*). Is that all?

FREDERIK. That's all.

COLONEL LAWTON (*Still dazed*). A prayer-book. . . . Me? Well, I'll be — (*Struck.*) Here, Parson, let's swap. You take the prayer-book — I'll take the old fob.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Stiffly*). Thank you. I already *have* a prayer-book.

(*Goes to the window and looks out — his back turned to the others — trying to control his feelings.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Her voice trembling with vexation and disappointment*). Well, all that I can say is — I'm disappointed in your uncle.

COLONEL LAWTON. Is it for this you hauled us out in the rain, Frederik?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Bitterly*). I see now . . . he only gave to the church to show off.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose! . . . I myself am disappointed, but —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He did! Or why didn't he *continue* his work? He was *not* a generous man. He was a hard, uncharitable, selfish old man.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Horrified*). Rose, my dear!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He was! If he were here, I'd say it to his face. The congregation sicked *you* after him. Now that he's gone and you'll get nothing more, they'll call you slow — slow and pokey. You'll see! You'll see to-morrow.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Sh!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. As for the Colonel, who spent half his time with Mr. Grimm, what is *his* reward? A watch-fob! (*Prophetically.*) Henry, mark my words — this will be the end of *you*. It's only a question of a few weeks. One of these new football playing ministers, just out of college, will take *your* place. It's not what you *preach* now that counts; it's what you coax out of the rich parishioners' pockets.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*In a low voice*). *Mrs.* Batholommey!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Religion doesn't stand where it did, Henry — there's no denying that. There was a time when people had to go to church — they weren't decent if they didn't. Now you have to wheedle 'em in. The church needs funds in these days when a college professor is openly saying that — (*her voice breaks*) the Star of Bethlehem was a comet. (*Weeps.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Control yourself. I must insist upon it, Mrs. Batholommey.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Breaking down — almost breathlessly*). Oh! If I said all the things I feel like saying about Peter Grimm — well — I shouldn't be fit to be a clergyman's wife. Not to leave his dear friends a —

COLONEL LAWTON. He *wasn't* liberal; but, for God's sake, madam, pull yourself together and think what he ought to have done for me! — I've listened to his plans for twenty years. I've virtually given up my business for him, and what have I got out of it? Not a button! Not a button! A Bible. Still *I'm* not complaining. Hang that chimney, Frederik, it's smoking.

(*Colonel Lawton stirs the fire — a log falls out and the flame goes down. The room has gradually grown darker as the night approaches.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Turning on Colonel Lawton*). Oh, you've feathered your nest, Colonel! You're a rich man.

COLONEL LAWTON (*Enraged, raising his voice*). What? I never came here that *you* weren't begging.

FREDERIK (*Virtuously — laying down the paper*). Well, I'm disgusted! When I think how much more I should have if he hadn't continually doled out money to every one of you!

COLONEL LAWTON. What?

FREDERIK. He was putty in your hands.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Yes, you can afford to defend his memory — you've got the money.

FREDERIK. I don't defend his memory. He was a gullible old fossil, and the whole town knew it.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. *You* did at any rate. I've heard you flatter him by the hour.

FREDERIK. Of course. He liked flattery and I gave him what he wanted. Why not? I gave him plenty. The rest of you were at the same thing; and I had the pleasure of watching him give you the money that belonged to me — to *me* — my money. . . . What business had he to be generous with my money? (*The Colonel strikes a match to light his cigar, and,*

as it flares up, the face of Frederik is seen — distorted with anger.) I'll tell you this: had he lived much longer, there would have been nothing left for me. It's a fortunate thing for me that —

(*He pauses, knowing that he has said too much. The room is now very dark. The rain has subsided. Everything is quiet outside. There is not a sound, save the ticking of the clock.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Solemnly — breaking the pause*). Young man, it might have been better had Mr. Grimm given his *all* to charity — for he has left his money to an ingrate.

FREDERIK (*Laughing derisively*). Ha! Ha!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Sh! Some one's coming.

(*All is quiet. The clock ticks in the dark. The door opens.*)

FREDERIK (*With a change of voice*). Come in. (*Nobody enters.*) Where's a light? We've been sitting in the dark like owls. Come in.

(*A pause. He strikes a match and holds it above his head. The light shows the open door. A wind, blowing through the doorway, causes the match to flicker, and Frederik protects it with his hand.*)

COLONEL LAWTON. I'll see who's . . . (*Looks out.*) No one.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Some one *must* be there. Who opened the door? (*The wind puts out the match in Frederik's hand. The room is once more in semi-darkness.*) There . . . it closed again . . .

(*Frederik strikes another match and holds it up. The door is seen to be closed.*)

COLONEL LAWTON (*Who is nearest to the door*). I didn't touch it.

FREDERIK (*Blowing out the match*). I'll have the lamps brought in.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Curious . . .

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. It was the wind — a draught.

COLONEL LAWTON (*Returning to his chair*). Must have been.

CATHERINE (*Entering with a lamp*). Did some one call me?

(*Without pausing, she sets the lamp on the table down right — opposite the group of characters. She turns up the wick and Peter Grimm is seen standing in the room — half in shadow.*

He is as he was in life. The clothes he wears appear to be those he wore about his house in the first act. He carries his hat in his hand. He has the same kind smile, the same deferential manner, but his face is more spiritual and years younger. The lamp, which Catherine has placed on the table, brightens the room.)

PETER (*Whose eyes never leave Catherine*). Yes . . . I called you . . . I've come back.

FREDERIK (*To Catherine*). No.

PETER. Don't be frightened, Katie. It's the most natural thing in the world. You wanted me and I came.

FREDERIK. Why? What made you think some one called you?

CATHERINE. I'm so accustomed to hear Uncle Peter's voice in this room, that sometimes I forget he's not here. . . . I can't get over it! I was almost sure I heard him speak . . . but, of course, as soon as I came in — I remembered. . . . But some one must have called me.

FREDERIK. No.

(*Peter stands looking at them, perplexed; not being able to comprehend as yet that he is not seen.*)

CATHERINE. Isn't it curious . . . to hear your name and turn and . . . (*unconsciously, she looks in Peter's face*) no one there?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Kindly*). Nerves . . . imagination.

FREDERIK. You need a complete change. (*Crossing to the door.*) For heaven's sake, let's have more light or we shall all be hearing voices.

PETER. Strange. . . . Nobody seems to see me. . . . It's — it's extraordinary! Katie! . . . Katie! . . .

(*His eyes have followed Catherine who is now at the door.*)

CATHERINE (*Pausing*). Perhaps it was the book I was reading that made me think I heard. . . . The Doctor lent it to me.

FREDERIK (*Pooh-poohing*). Oh!

CATHERINE (*Half to herself*). If he *does* know, if he *can* see, he'll be comforted by the thought that I'm going to do every thing he wanted.

(*She passes out of the room.*)

PETER (*Showing that he does not want her to carry out his wishes*). No, no, don't . . . Frederik, I want to speak to you.

(*Frederik, not glancing in Peter's direction, lights a cigarette.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Well, Frederik, I hope the old gentleman can see his mistake *now*.

PETER. I can see several mistakes. (*Rev. Mr. Batholommey rises and goes towards the door, pausing in front of Peter to take out his watch.*) . . . Mr. Batholommey, I'm glad to see you in my house . . . I'm very sorry that you can't see *me*. I wasn't pleased with my funeral sermon; it was very gloomy — very. I never was so depressed in my life.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*To Frederik*). Do you know what I should like to say to your uncle?

PETER. I know.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I hope at least you'll care for the parish poor as your uncle did — and keep on with *some* of his charities.

PETER (*Putting his hand on Rev. Mr. Batholommey's shoulder*). That's all attended to. I arranged all that with Frederik. He must look after my charities.

FREDERIK. I might as well tell you now — you needn't look to me. It's Uncle Peter's fault if your charities are cut off.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Half-doubtingly*). It doesn't seem possible that he made no arrangements to continue his good works. (*Frederik remains stolid. Rev. Mr. Batholommey puts back his watch after glancing at it.*) Just thirty minutes to make a call.

(*Goes into the hall to put on his overshoes, coat, etc., leaving Peter's hand extended in the air.*)

COLONEL LAWTON (*Rising*). I must be toddling. (*Pauses.*) It's queer, Frederik, how things turn out in this world.

(*He stands, thinking matters over — cigar in mouth, his hand on his chin.*)

PETER (*Slipping his hand through Colonel Lawton's arm. They seem to look each other in the eye*). You were perfectly right about it, Thomas, I *should* have made a will . . . I — suppose

it *is* a little too late, isn't it? . . . It would be — er — unusual to do it now, wouldn't it?

(*Colonel Lawton, who has heard nothing — seen nothing — moves away as though Peter had never held his arm, and goes up into the hall for his cape and overshoes.*)

COLONEL LAWTON (*Noticing an old gold-headed walking-stick in the hall*). Oh, er — what are you going to do with all the old man's family relics, Frederik?

FREDERIK. The junk, you mean? I shall lay it on some scrap-heap, I suppose. It's not worth a penny.

COLONEL LAWTON. I'm not so sure of that. They say there's a lot of money paid for this sort of trash.

FREDERIK. Is that so? Not a bad idea to have a dealer in to look it over.

(*Peter stands listening, a faint smile on his face.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. If I could have the old clock — cheap, Frederik, I'd take it off your hands.

FREDERIK. I'll find out how much it's worth. I shall have everything appraised.

(*Sets his watch by the clock. Mrs. Batholommey gives him a look and joins her husband at the door.*)

COLONEL LAWTON. Good-night.

(*Exit, closing the door.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*As Rev. Mr. Batholommey goes out — calling after him*). Henry, Catherine wants you to come back for supper.

(*Mrs. Batholommey leaves the room too disgusted for words. Frederik goes into the office.*)

PETER (*Now alone*). We live and learn . . . and oh! what I have learned since I came back. . . . (*He goes to his own particular peg in the vestibule and hangs up his hat. He glances at the wedding presents. Presently he sees the flowers which Catherine has placed on the desk. With a smile, he touches the flowers. Marta enters with another lamp, which she places on a table. As Peter's eyes rest on Marta, he nods and smiles in recognition, waiting for a response.*) Well, Marta? . . . Don't you know your old master? . . .

No? . . . No? . . . (*She winds the clock and leaves the room.*) I seem to be a stranger in my own house . . . yet the watch-dog knew me and wagged his tail as I came in. (*He stands trying to comprehend it all.*) Well! Well!

FREDERIK (*Looking at his watch, re-enters from the office and goes to the 'phone, which presently rings. Frederik instantly lifts the receiver as though not wishing to attract attention. In a low voice*). Yes . . . I was waiting for you. How are you, Mr. Hicks? (*Listens.*) I'm not anxious to sell — no. I prefer to carry out my dear old uncle's wishes. (*Peter eyes him — a faint smile on his lips.*) If I got my price? Well . . . of course in that case . . . I might be tempted. To-morrow? No, I can't see you to-morrow. I'm going to be married to-morrow, and leave at once for New York. Thank you. (*Listens.*) To-night? Very well, but I don't want it known. I'll sell, but it must be for more than the price my uncle refused. Make it ten thousand more and it's done. (*Listens.*) You'll come to-night? . . . Yes, yes . . . (*Listens at the 'phone.*) The dear old man told you his plans never failed, eh? God rest his soul! (*Laughing indulgently.*) Ha! Ha! Ha!

PETER. Ha! Ha! Ha!

FREDERIK (*Echoing Hicks' words*). What would he say if he knew? What could he say? Everything must change.

(*A far-away rumble of thunder is heard — the lightning flickers at the window and a flash is seen on the telephone which tinkles and responds as though from the electric shock. Exclaiming* "Ugh," *Frederik drops the receiver — which hangs down.*)

PETER (*The storm passes as he speaks into the receiver without touching the telephone*). Good-evening, my friend. We shall soon meet — face to face. You won't be able to carry this matter through. . . . (*Looking into space as though he could see the future.*) You're not well and you're going out to supper to-night; . . . you will eat something that will cause you to pass over. . . . I shall see you to-morrow. . . . A happy crossing!

FREDERIK (*Picks up the receiver*). Hello? . . . You don't

feel well, you say? (*Then echoing the purport of Hicks' answer.*) I see. . . . Your lawyer can attend to everything to-night without you. Very well. It's entirely a question of money, Mr. Hicks. Send your lawyer to the Grimm Manor Hotel. I'll arrange at once for a room. Good-by. (*Hangs up the receiver.*) That's off my mind. (*He lights a fresh cigarette — his face expressing the satisfaction he feels in the prospect of a perfectly idle future. Peter looks at him as though to say: "And that's the boy whom I loved and trusted!" Frederik gets his hat, throws his coat over his arm, and hastens out.*)

PETER (*Turns and faces the door leading into the next room, as though he could feel the presence of some one waiting there*). Yes . . . I am still in the house. Come in . . . come in . . . (*He repeats the signal of the first act.*) Ou-oo. (*The door opens slowly — and Catherine enters as though at Peter's call. She looks about her, not understanding. He holds out his arms to her. Catherine walks slowly towards him. He takes her in his arms, but she does not respond. She does not know that she is being held.*) There! There! . . . Don't worry. . . . It's all right. . . . We'll arrange things very differently. I've come back to change all my plans. (*She moves away a step — just out of his embrace. He tries to call her back.*) Katie! . . . Can't I make my presence known to *you?* Katie! Can't my love for you outlive *me?* Isn't it here in the home? . . . Don't cry.

(*She moves about the room in thought. As Peter watches her — she pauses near his desk.*)

CATHERINE (*Suddenly*). Crying doesn't help matters.

PETER. She hears me. She doesn't know it, but she hears me. She's cheering up. (*She inhales the flowers — a half smile on her lips.*) That's right, you haven't smiled before since I died. (*Suddenly giving way to the realization of her loss, Catherine sighs.*)

PETER (*Correcting himself*). I — I mean — since I learned that there was a happier place than the world I left. . . . I'm a trifle confused. I've not had time to adjust myself to these new conditions. (*Catherine smiles sadly — goes up to the*

window, and, leaning against the pane, looks out into the night. Peter continues comfortingly.) The dead have never really died, you know. We couldn't die if we tried. We're all about you. . . . Look at the gardens: they've died, haven't they? But there they are all the better for it. Death is the greatest thing in the world. It's really a — Ha! — delightful experience. What is it, after all? A nap from which we waken rested, refreshened . . . a sleep from which we spring up like children tumbling out of bed — ready to frolic through another world. I was an old man a few days ago; now I'm a boy. I feel much younger than you — much younger. (*A conflict is going on in Catherine's mind. She walks to the chair by the fireplace and sits — her back to the audience. He approaches her and lays a tender hand on her shoulder.*) I know what you're thinking. . . . Katie, I want you to break that very foolish promise I asked you to make. You're almost tempted to. Break it! Break it at once; then — (*glancing smilingly towards the door through which he came — as though he wished to leave — like a child longing to go back to play*) then I could — take the journey back in peace. . . . I can't go until you do — and I . . . I long to go . . . Isn't my message any clearer to you? (*Reading her mind.*) You have a feeling . . . an impression of what I'm saying; but the words . . . the words are not clear . . . Mm . . . let me see. . . . If you can't understand me — there's the Doctor, he'll know how to get the message — he'll find the way. . . . Then I can hurry back . . . home . . .

CATHERINE (*Helplessly — changing her position like a tired child.*) Oh, I'm so alone.

PETER (*Cheerily*). Not alone at all — not at all. I shall drop in very often . . . and then, there's your mother. (*Suddenly remembering.*) Oh, yes, I had almost forgotten. I have a message for you, Katie. . . . (*He seats himself in a chair which is almost in front of her.*) I've met your mother. (*She sits in a reverie. Peter continues with the air of a returned traveler relating his experiences.*) She heard that I had crossed over and there she was — waiting for me. You're

thinking of it, aren't you? Wondering if we met. . . . Yes, that was the first interesting experience. She knew me at once. "You were Peter Grimm," she said, "before you knew better" — that's what *they* call leaving *this* world — "to *know better.*" You call it "dying." (*Confidentially.*) She's been here often, it seems, watching over you. I told her how much I loved you and said that you had a happy home. I spoke of your future — of my plans for you and Frederik. "Peter Grimm," she said, "you've over-looked the most important thing in the world — love. You haven't given her *her right* to the choice of her lover — *her right!*" Then it came over me that I'd made a terrible mistake . . . and at that minute, you called to me. (*Impressively.*) In the darkness surrounding all I had left behind, there came a light . . . a glimmer where you stood . . . a clear call in the night. . . . It seemed as though I had not been away one second . . . but in that second, you had suffered. . . . Now I am back to show you the way. . . . I am here to put my hand on your dear head and give you your mother's blessing to say she will be with you in spirit until she holds you in her arms — you and your loved husband — (*Catherine turns in her chair and looks towards the door of the room in which James is working. Peter catches the thought*) — yes, James, it's you . . . And the message ended in this kiss. (*Prints a kiss on her cheek.*) Can't you *think* I'm with you, dear child? Can't you *think* I'm trying to help you? Can't you even hope? Oh, come, at least hope! Anybody can hope.

(*Catherine rises with an entire change of manner — takes a bright red blossom from the vase on Peter's desk — then deliberately walks to the door of the room in which James is working. Peter follows her action hopefully. She does not tap on the door, however, but turns and sits at the piano — in thought — not facing the piano. She puts Peter's flowers against her face. Then, laying the flowers on the piano, sings softly three or four bars of the song she sang in the first act — and stops abruptly.*)

CATHERINE (*To herself*). That I should sit here singing — at a time like this!

PETER. Sing! Sing! Why not? Lift up your voice like a bird! Your old uncle doesn't sleep out there in the dust. That's only the dream. He's here — here — alive. All his age gone and youth glowing in his heart. If I could only tell you what lies before you — before us all! If people even *suspected* what the next life really is, they wouldn't waste time here — I can tell you *that*. They'd do dreadful things to get away from this existence — make for the nearest pond or — (*Pausing abruptly.*) Ah, here comes some one who'll know all about it! (*The Doctor comes from William's room. Peter greets him in a cordial but casual way, as though he had parted from him only an hour before.*) Well, Andrew, I apologize. (*Bowing obsequiously.*) You were right. I apologize.

CATHERINE. How is he, Doctor?

DR. MACPHERSON. William is better. Dropped off to sleep again. Can't quite understand him.

PETER. I apologize. I said that if I could come back, I would; and here I am — apologizing. Andrew! Andrew! (*Trying to attract Dr. MacPherson's attention.*) I have a message, but I can't get it across. This is your chance. I want *you* to take it. I don't wish Catherine to marry Frederik.

DR. MACPHERSON. He's somewhat feverish yet.

PETER. Can't *you* understand one word?

DR. MACPHERSON. It's a puzzling case. . . .

PETER. What? Mine?

DR. MACPHERSON (*Getting a pad from his pocket — writing out a prescription with his fountain pen*). I'll leave this prescription at the druggist's —

PETER. I'm quite shut out. . . . They've closed the door and turned the key on me.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Suddenly noticing that Catherine seems more cheerful*). What's happened? I left you in tears and here you are — all smiles.

CATHERINE. Yes, I — I am happier — for some reason . . . For the last few minutes I — I've had such a strange feeling.

DR. MACPHERSON. That's odd: so have I! Been as restless

as a hungry mouse. Something seemed to draw me down here — can't explain it.

PETER. I'm beginning to be felt in this house.

DR. MACPHERSON. Catherine, I have the firm conviction that, in a very short time, I shall hear from Peter.

(*Sitting at the table.*)

PETER. I hope so. It's high time now.

DR. MACPHERSON. What I want is some positive proof; some absolute test; some — er —

(*Thinks.*)

(*Catherine has seated herself at the table. — Unconsciously they both occupy the same seats as in the first act.*)

PETER. The trouble is with other people, not with us. You want us to give all sorts of proofs; and here we are just back for a little while — very poorly put together on the chance that you'll see us at all.

DR. MACPHERSON. Poor old Peter — bless his heart! (*His elbow on the table as though he had been thinking over the matter. Catherine sits quietly listening.*) If he kept that compact with me, and came back, — do you know what I'd ask him first? If our work goes on.

PETER. Well, now, that's a regular sticker. It's bothered me considerably since I crossed over.

CATHERINE. What do you mean, Doctor?

DR. MACPHERSON. The question *every man wants the answer to:* what's to become of me — *me — my work?* Am I going to be a bone setter in the next life and he a tulip man? . . . I wonder.

PETER. Andrew, I've asked everybody — Tom, Dick and Harry. One spirit told me that sometimes our work *does* go on; but he was an awful liar — you know we don't drop our earth habits at once. He said that a genius is simply a fellow who's been there before in some other world and knows his business. Now then: (*confidentially preparing to open an argument — sitting in his old seat at the table, as in the first act*) it stands to reason, Andrew, doesn't it? What chance has the beginner compared with a fellow who knew his business before he was born?

DR. MACPHERSON (*Unconsciously grasping the thought*). I believe it is possible to have more than one chance at our work.

PETER. There . . . you caught that. . . . Why can't you take my message to Catherine?

DR. MACPHERSON (*Rising to get his shawl — gruffly*). Thought over what I told you concerning this marriage? Not too late to back out.

PETER. He's beginning to take the message.

CATHERINE. Everything's arranged: I shall be married as Uncle Peter wished. I sha'n't change my mind.

DR. MACPHERSON. H'm!

(*Picks up his shawl.*)

PETER (*Trying to detain the Doctor — tugging at his shawl without seeming to pull it*). Don't give up! Don't give up! A girl can always change her mind — while there's life. Don't give up! (*The Doctor turns, facing Peter, looking directly at him as he puts his hand in his coat pocket.*) You heard that, eh? . . . Didn't you? Yes? Did it cross over? . . . What? . . . It did? . . . You're looking me in the face, Andrew; can you see me? (*The Doctor takes a pencil out of his pocket, writes a prescription, throws his shawl over his shoulder — turning his back towards Peter and facing Catherine.*) Tc! Tc! Tc!

DR. MACPHERSON. Good-night.

CATHERINE. Good-night.

(*Catherine goes quietly to the fireplace, kneeling down, mends the fire, and remains there sitting on an ottoman.*)

PETER (*Calling after the Doctor*). If I could only make some sign — to start you thinking; but I can't depend upon *you*. I see that. . . . (*Then changing — as though he had an idea.*) Ah, yes! There *is* another way. Now to work. (*With renewed activity, he taps in the direction of the office door, although he himself stands three feet away from it. The door opens promptly and James appears on the threshold — pen in hand — as though something had made him rise suddenly from his desk. Catherine, still seated, does not see James, who stands looking at her — remembering that she is to be married on the*

following day. Peter tempts James.) Yes, she *is* pretty, James . . . young and lovely. . . . Look! . . . There are kisses tangled in her hair where it curls . . . hundreds of them. . . . Are you going to let her go? Her lips are red with the red of youth. Every smile is an invocation to life. Who could resist her smiles? Can you, James? No, you will not let her go. And her hands, James. . . . Look! Hands made to clasp and cling to yours. Imagine her little feet trudging happily about *your* home . . . Look at her shoulders . . . shaped for a resting-place for a little head. . . . You were right, James, we should ask nothing of our girls but to marry the men they love and be happy wives and happy mothers of happy children. You feel what I am saying. . . . You couldn't live without her, could you? No? Very well, then — (*Changing abruptly.*) Now, it's your turn.

(*James pauses a moment. There is silence. Then he comes forward a step and Catherine, hearing him, turns and rises.*)

JAMES (*Coldly — respectfully*). Miss Grimm . . .

CATHERINE. James . . .

JAMES. I felt that you were here and wished to speak to me. I — I don't know why . . .

PETER. Good for James.

CATHERINE (*Shaking hands with him*). I'm very glad to see you again, James. (*When Peter sees that he has brought the two young people together, he stands in the background. The lovers are in the shadow, but Peter's figure is marked and clear.*) Why did you go away?

JAMES. Oh — er —

CATHERINE. And without saying a word.

JAMES. Your uncle sent me away. I told him the truth again.

CATHERINE. Oh. . . .

JAMES. I am going in a few hours.

CATHERINE. Where are you going? What do you intend to do?

JAMES (*Half-heartedly*). Father and I are going to try our luck together. We're going to start with a small fruit farm. It will give me a chance to experiment. . . .

CATHERINE. It will seem very strange when I come back home. . . . Uncle gone . . . and you, James. (*Her voice trembling.*)

JAMES. I hope you'll be happy, Catherine.

CATHERINE. James, Uncle died smiling at me — thinking of me . . . and just before he went, he gave me his mother's wedding ring and asked me to marry Frederik. I shall never forget how happy he was when I promised. That was all he wanted. His last smile was for me . . . and there he sat — still smiling after he was gone . . . the smile of a man leaving the world perfectly satisfied — at peace. It's like a hand on my heart — hurting it — when I question anything he wanted. I couldn't meet him in the hereafter if I didn't do everything he wished; I couldn't say my prayers at night; I couldn't speak his name in them. . . . He trusted me; depended upon me; did everything for me; so I must do this for him. . . . I wanted you to know this, James, because . . .

JAMES. Why haven't you told Frederik the truth?

CATHERINE. I have.

JAMES. That you don't love him? (*Catherine doesn't answer, but James knows.*) . . . And he's willing to take you like that? — a little girl like you — in *that* way. . . . God! He's rotten all the way through. He's even worse than I thought. Katie, I didn't mean to say a word of this to-day — not a word; but a moment since — something made me change my mind — I don't know what! . . . (*Peter smiles.*) I felt that I *must* talk to you. You looked so young, so helpless, such a child. You've never had to think for yourself — you don't know what you're doing. You *couldn't* live under it, Catherine. You're making the greatest mistake possible, if you marry where you don't love. Why should you carry out your uncle's plans? You're going to be wretched for life to please a dead man who doesn't know it; or, if he does know it, regrets it bitterly.

PETER. I agree with you now, James.

CATHERINE. You mustn't say that, James.

JAMES. But I will say it — I will speak my mind. I don't care how fond you were of your uncle or how much he did for you

— it wasn't right to ask this of you. It wasn't fair. The whole thing is the mistake of a *very* obstinate old man.

CATHERINE. James!

JAMES. I loved him, too; but he *was* an obstinate old man. Sometimes I think it was the Dutch blood in his veins.

PETER. A very frank, outspoken fellow. I like to hear him talk — now.

JAMES. Do you know why I was sent away? Why I quarrelled with your uncle? I said that I loved you . . . he asked me. . . . I didn't tell him because I had any hopes — I hadn't. . . . I haven't now. . . . (*Struck.*) But in spite of what I'm saying . . . I don't know what makes me think that I . . . I could take you in my arms and you would let me . . . but I do think it.

CATHERINE (*Retreats, backing towards Peter*). No! . . . Don't touch me, James — you mustn't! Don't! . . . Don't! (*Peter pushes her into James' arms, without touching her. She exclaims* "Oh, James!" *and fairly runs towards James as though violently propelled. In reality, she thinks that she is yielding to an impulse. As she reaches him, she exclaims* "No," *and turns back, but James, with outstretched arms, catches her.*)

JAMES. You love me.

(*Draws her to him.*)

CATHERINE. Don't make me say that, James.

JAMES. I *will* make you say it! You *do* love me.

CATHERINE. No matter if I do, that won't alter matters.

JAMES. What? What?

CATHERINE. No, no, don't say any more. . . . I won't hear it. (*She stands free of James — then turns and walks to the stairs.*) Good-by, Jim.

JAMES. Do you mean it? Are you really going to sacrifice yourself because of — Am I really losing you? . . . Catherine! Catherine!

CATHERINE (*In tears — beseechingly*). Please don't . . . Please don't. . . .

(*Frederik enters. Until the entrance of Frederik, Peter has had hope in his face, but now he begins to feel apprehensive.*)

FREDERIK (*Throwing his hat and coat on a chair*). I have some work to do — more of my uncle's unopened mail; then I'll join you, Hartman. We must — er — make haste.

(*James looks at Catherine, then at Frederik. Catherine gives him an imploring glance — urging him not to speak. Frederik has gone to Peter's desk.*)

JAMES. I'll come back later.

(*Goes towards the hall.*)

FREDERIK. Catherine, have you asked James to be present at the ceremony to-morrow?

CATHERINE. No.

FREDERIK. James, will you —

JAMES. I shall be leaving early in the morning.

FREDERIK. Too bad!

(*Exit James.*)

(*Frederik lights the desk candles, takes the mail out of the drawer — opens two letters — tears them up after barely glancing at them — then sees Catherine still standing at the foot of the stairs — her back to him. He lays the cigar on the desk, crosses, and, taking her in his arms, kisses her.*)

CATHERINE (*With a revulsion of feeling*). No! No! No! (*She covers her face with her hands — trying to control herself.*) Please! . . . Not now. . . .

FREDERIK. Why not *now?* (*Suspiciously.*) Has Hartman been talking to you? What has he been saying to you? (*Catherine starts slowly up the stairs.*) Wait a moment, please. . . . (*As she retreats a step up the stairs, he follows her.*) Do you really imagine you — you care for that fellow?

CATHERINE. Don't — please.

FREDERIK. I'm sorry to insist. Of course, I knew there was a sort of schoolgirl attachment on your part; . . . that you'd known each other since childhood. I don't take it at all seriously. In three months, you'll forget him. I must insist, however, that you do *not* speak to him again to-night. After to-morrow — after we are married — I'm quite sure that you will not forget you are my wife, Catherine — my wife.

CATHERINE. I sha'n't forget.

(*She escapes into her room. Frederik goes to his desk.*)

PETER (*Confronting Frederik*). Now, sir, I have something to say to you, Frederik Grimm, my beloved nephew! I had to die to find you out; but I know you! (*Frederik is reading a letter.*) You sit there opening a dead man's mail — with the heart of a stone — thinking: "He's gone! he's gone! — so I'll break every promise!" But there is something you have forgotten — something that always finds us out: the law of reward and punishment. Even now it is overtaking you. Your hour has struck. (*Frederik takes up another letter and begins to read it; then, as though disturbed by a passing thought, he puts it down. As though perplexed by the condition of his own mind, he ponders, his eyes resting unconsciously on Peter.*) Your hour has struck.

FREDERIK (*To himself*). What in the world is the matter with me to-night?

PETER. Read!

FREDERIK (*Has opened a long, narrow, blue envelope containing a letter on blue paper and a small photograph. He stares at the letter, aghast*). My God! Here's luck. . . . Here's luck! From that girl Annamarie to my uncle. Oh, if he had read it!

PETER (*Standing in front of Frederik looks into space — as though reading the letter in the air*). "Dear Mr. Grimm: I have not written because I can't do anything to help William, and I am ashamed."

FREDERIK. Wh! (*As though he had read the first part to himself, now reads aloud.*) "Don't be too hard upon me. . . . I have gone hungry trying to save a few pennies for him, but I never could; and now I see that I cannot hope to have him back. William is far better off with you. I —"

(*Hesitates.*)

PETER (*Going back of the desk, standing behind Frederik's chair*). Go on. . . .

FREDERIK. "I wish that I might see him once again. Perhaps I could come and go in the night."

PETER. That's a terrible thing for a mother to write.

FREDERIK (*Who has been looking down at the letter — suddenly feeling Peter's presence*). Who's that? Who's in this room? (*Looks over his shoulder — then glances about.*) I could have sworn somebody was looking over my shoulder . . . or had come in at the door . . . or . . . (*But seeing no one — he continues.*) "I met some one from home; . . . if there is any truth in the rumour of Catherine's marriage — it mustn't be, Mr. Grimm — it mustn't be . . . not to Frederik. For Frederik is my little boy's —" (*Frederik gives a furtive glance upstairs at the door of the child's room. Picks up the small picture which was in the envelope.*) Her picture . . . (*Turns it over — looks at the back — reads.*) "For my boy, from Annamarie."

(*Frederik, conscious-stricken for the time being, bows his head.*)

PETER. For the first time since I entered this house, you are yourself, Frederik Grimm. Once more a spark of manhood is alight in your soul. Courage! It's not too late to repent. Turn back, lad! Follow your impulse. Take the little boy in your arms. Go down on your knees and ask his mother's pardon. Turn over a fresh page, that I may leave this house in peace. . . .

FREDERIK (*Looks about uneasily, then glances towards the door leading into the hall*). Who is at the door? Curious . . . I thought I heard some one at . . .

PETER. I am at the door — I, Peter Grimm! Annamarie is at the door — the little girl who is ashamed to come home; the old mother in the kitchen breaking her heart for some word. William is at the door — your own flesh and blood — nameless; Katie, sobbing her heart out — you can hear her; all — we are all at the door — every soul in this house. We are all at the door of your conscience, Frederik. . . . Don't keep us waiting, my boy. It's very hard to kill the love I had for you. I long to love you again — to take you back to my heart — lies and all. (*Frederik rises — in deep thought.*) Yes! Call her! Tell her the truth. Give her back her promise. . . . Give her back her home. . . . Close the door on a peaceful, happy, silent room and go. Think —

think of that moment when you give her back her freedom! Think of her joy, her gratitude, her affection. It's worth living for, lad. Speak! Make haste and call her, Fritz. (*Frederik takes several steps — then turns back to the desk. He tears the letter in two, muttering to himself,* "Damn the woman," *and sinks into his chair.*) Frederik Grimm, stand up before me! (*Frederik starts to rise, but changes his mind.*) Stand up! (*Frederik rises — not knowing why he has risen. Peter points an accusing finger at Frederik.*) Liar to the dead! Cheat, thief, hypocrite! You sha'n't have my little girl. You only want her for a week, a day, an hour. I refuse. I have come back to take her from you and you cannot put me to rest. . . . I have come back. . . . You cannot drive me from your thoughts — I am there. . . . (*Tapping his forehead, without touching it.*) I am looking over your shoulder . . . in at the window . . . under the door. . . . You are breathing me in the air. . . . I am looking at your heart. (*He brings his clenched fist down on the desk in answer to Frederik's gesture; but, despite the seeming violence of the blow, he makes no sound.*) Hear me! You shall hear me! Hear me! (*Calling loudly.*) Hear me! Hear me! Hear me! Will nobody hear me? Is there no one in this house to hear me? No one? Has my journey been in vain? . . . (*For the first time fully realizing the situation.*) Oh, must we stand or fall by the mistakes we made here and the deed we did? Is there no second chance in this world?

FREDERIK (*With a sneer on his lips as though trying to banish his thoughts*). Psh!

(*Marta enters with a tray, containing a pot of coffee and a plate of small cakes. Peter, who has watched her with appealing eyes, like a dog craving attention, glances from her to the desk and from the desk back to Marta — trying to tempt her to look at the torn letter. Frederik, deep in thought, does not notice her. Peter points to the desk as though to say,* "*Look!*" *After a pause, she picks up the picture and the letter — holding them in one hand to clear a spot for the tray which she is about to set on the desk.*)

PETER (*Speaking in a hushed voice*). Marta, see what you have in your hand . . . that letter . . . there . . . read it. . . . Run to Catherine with it. Read it from the house-tops. . . . The letter . . . Look! There you have the story of Annamarie. . . . It is the one way to know the truth in this house — the only way. . . . There in your hand — the letter. . . . He will never speak. . . . The letter for Catherine.

(*Marta sets down the picture and the letter; but something prompts her to look at them; however, before she can carry out her impulse, Frederik starts up.*)

FREDERIK. My God! How you startled me! (*Marta sets down the tray.*) Oh! To be off and out of this old rat-trap. (*He wipes his forehead with his black-bordered handkerchief.*) I mean — our loss comes home to us so keenly here where we are accustomed to see him.

MARTA. A cup of coffee, sir?

FREDERIK. No, no, no.

MARTA (*Pathetically*). I thought you wished to keep to your uncle's customs. . . . He always took it at this time.

FREDERIK (*Recovering*). Yes, yes, of course.

MARTA. . . . No word? . . .

FREDERIK (*Hesitates*). What do you mean?

MARTA. No letter?

FREDERIK. Letter? . . . (*Covering the letter with his hand.*) From whom? . . .

MARTA. From . . . At a time like this, I thought . . . I felt . . . that Annamarie . . . that there should be some message. . . . Every day I expect to hear . . .

FREDERIK. No.

(*Peter gestures to Marta — pointing to the picture and letter, now covered by Frederik's hand.*)

MARTA (*Hesitating*). Are you certain?

FREDERIK. Quite certain. (*She curtsies and leaves the room. Frederik, as though relieved to see her go, jumps to his feet, and, tearing the letter in smaller pieces, lights them in the candle, dropping the burning pieces on a tray. As the flame dies out,*

Frederik brushes the blackened paper into the wastebasket.)
There's an end to *that!*

(*Peter crouches near the basket — hovering over it, his hands clasped helplessly. After a pause, he raises his hand, until it points to a bedroom above. An echo of the circus music is very faintly heard; not with the blaring of brasses, but with the sounds of elfin horns, conveying the impression of a phantom circus band. The door of William's room opens, and he comes out as though to listen to the music. He wears a sleeping-suit and is barefooted. He has come down stairs before Frederik sees him. Frederik quickly puts aside the photograph, laying it on the desk, covering it with his hand.*)

FREDERIK (*Gruffly*). Why aren't you in bed? If you're ill, that's the proper place for you.

WILLIAM. I came down to hear the circus music.

FREDERIK. Circus music?

WILLIAM. It woke me up.

FREDERIK. The circus left town days ago. You must have been dreaming.

WILLIAM. The band's playing now. Don't you hear it, sir? The procession's passing. (*He runs to the window and opens it. The music stops. A breeze sweeps through the room — bellies out the curtains and causes the lustres to jingle on the mantel. Surprised.*) No. It's almost dark. There's no procession . . . no shining horses. . . . (*Turning sadly away from the window.*) I wonder what made me think the — I must have been dreaming.

(*Rubbing his eyes.*)

FREDERIK (*Goes to the window, closes it. The child looks at him and, in retreating from him, unconsciously backs towards Peter*). Are you feeling better?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir, I feel better — and hungry.

FREDERIK. Go back to bed.

WILLIAM. Yes, sir.

(*Frederik sits.*)

PETER. Where's your mother, William?

WILLIAM. Do you know where Annamarie is?

PETER. Ah!

FREDERIK. Why do you ask me? What should I know of her?

WILLIAM. Grandmother doesn't know; Miss Catherine doesn't know; nobody knows.

FREDERIK. I don't know, either. (*Tears up the picture — turning so that William does not see what he is doing. Peter, who has been smiling at William, motions him to come nearer. William, feeling Peter's presence, looks round the room.*)

WILLIAM. Mr. Frederik, where's *old* Mr. Grimm?

FREDERIK. Dead.

WILLIAM. Are you sure he's dead? 'Cause —

(*Puzzled — unable to explain himself, he hesitates.*)

FREDERIK (*Annoyed*). You'd better go to bed.

WILLIAM (*Pointing to a glass of water on a tray*). Can I have a drink of water, please?

FREDERIK. Go to bed, sir, or you'll be punished. Water's not good for little boys with fever.

WILLIAM (*Going towards the stairs*). Wish I could find a cold brook and lie in it.

(*Goes slowly up the stairs. Frederik would destroy the pieces of the picture; but Peter faces him as though forbidding him to touch it, and, for the first time, Frederik imagines he sees the apparition of his uncle.*)

FREDERIK (*In a very low voice — almost inaudibly*). My God! I thought I saw . . . (*Receding a step and yet another step as the vision of Peter is still before him, he passes out of the room, wiping the beads of sweat from his forehead. William, hearing the door close, comes downstairs and, running to the table at back, drinks a glass of water.*)

WILLIAM. Um! That's good!

PETER. William!

(*William doesn't see Peter yet, but he feels his influence.*)

WILLIAM. Wish it *had* been the circus music.

PETER. You shall hear it all again. (*Gestures towards the plate of cakes on the tray.*) Come, William, here's something very nice.

WILLIAM (*Seeing the cakes*). Um! Cakes!

(*He steals to the tray, looking over his shoulder in fear of being caught.*)

PETER. Don't be frightened. I'm here to protect you. Help yourself to the cakes. William, do you think you could deliver a message for me . . . a very important message? . . . (*The circus music is heard. William sits at the tray and Peter seats himself opposite as though he were the host doing the honours. William, being unconsciously coaxed by Peter, is prevailed upon to choose the biggest cake. He takes a bite, looking towards Peter.*)

WILLIAM (*To himself*). Ha! . . . Think I *am* dreaming. (*Rubbing his little stomach ecstatically.*) Hope I won't wake up and find there wasn't any cake.

PETER. Don't worry, you won't. (*William has taken another piece of cake which he nibbles at — now holding a piece in each hand.*) Pretty substantial dream, eh? There's a fine, fat raisin. (*William eats the raisin, then looks into the sugar-bowl.*) Don't hesitate, William. Sugar won't hurt you now. Nothing can hurt you any more. Fall to, William — help yourself. (*William looks over his shoulder, fearing the return of Frederik.*) Oh, he won't come back in a hurry. Ha! Frederik *thought* he saw me, William; well, he didn't. He had a bad conscience — hallucination. (*William nibbles a lump of sugar.*) Now, William, I have a message for you. Won't you try and take it for me, eh? (*But William eats another lump of sugar.*) I see . . . I can't expect to get any assistance from a boy while his little stomach's calling. (*William empties the cream jug and helps himself to cakes. Presently the music dies out.*) Now I'm going to tell you something. (*Impressively.*) You're a very lucky boy, William; I congratulate you. Do you know why — of all this household — you are the only one to help me? . . . This is the secret: in a little time — it won't be long — you're going — (*as though he were imparting the most delightful information*) — to know better! Think of *that!* Isn't the news splendid? (*But William eats on.*) Think of what most of us have to endure before *we* know better! Why, William,

you're going into the circus without paying for a ticket. You're laying down the burden before you climb the hill. And in your case, William, you are fortunate indeed; for there are some little soldiers in this world already handicapped when they begin the battle of life. . . . Their parents haven't fitted them for the struggle. . . . Like little moon moths, — they look in at the windows; they beat at the panes; they see the lights of happy firesides — the lights of home; but they never get in. . . . You are one of these wanderers, William. . . . And so, it is well for you that before your playing time is over — before your man's work begins, — you're going to know the great secret. Happy boy! No coarsening of your child's heart, until you stand before the world like Frederik; no sweat and toil such as dear old James is facing; no dimming of the eye and trembling of the hand such as the poor old Doctor shall know in time to come; no hot tears to blister your eyes, . . . tears such as Katie is shedding now; but, in all your youth, your faith — your innocence, — you'll fall asleep and oh! the awakening, William! . . . "It is well with the *child*." (*William lays down the cake and, clasping his hands, thinks. Peter answers his thoughts.*) What? No — don't think of it! Nonsense! You *don't* want to grow up to be a man. Grow up to fail? Or, still worse — to succeed — to be famous? To wear a heavy laurel wreath? A wreath to be held up by tired hands that ache for one hour's freedom. No, no, you're to escape all that, William; joy is on the way to meet you with sweets in its outstretched hands and laughter on its lips. (*William takes the last swallow of a piece of cake, exclaims* "Hm!" *in a satisfied way, brushes the crumbs off his lap, and sits back in his chair.*) Have you had enough? Good! William, I want you to try to understand that you're to help me, will you? Will you tell Miss Catherine that —

WILLIAM (*Without looking up, his hands folded in his lap*). Take me back with you, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. Can you see me, William?

WILLIAM. No, sir; but I know.

PETER. Come here. (*William doesn't move.*) Here . . . here . . . (*William advances to the center of the room and pauses hesitatingly.*) Take my hand . . . (*William approaches in the direction of the voice. Peter takes William's outstretched hand.*) Have you got it?

WILLIAM. No, sir. . . .

PETER (*Putting his hand on William's head*). Now? . . . Do you feel it?

WILLIAM. I feel something, yes, sir. (*Puts his hand on Peter's hand, which is still on his head.*) But where's *your* hand? There's nothing there.

PETER. But you hear me?

WILLIAM. I can't really hear you. . . . It's a dream. (*Coaxingly.*) Oh, Mr. Grimm, take me back with you.

PETER. You're not quite ready to go with me yet, William — not until we can see each other face to face.

WILLIAM. Why did you come back, Mr. Grimm? Wasn't it nice where you were?

PETER. It was indeed. It was like — (*whimsically*) — new toys.

WILLIAM (*To whom the idea appeals*). As nice as that!

PETER. Nicer. But I had to come back with this message. I want you to help me to deliver it.
(*Indicating the picture.*)

WILLIAM. Where's the bosom of Abraham, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. Eh?

WILLIAM. The minister says you're asleep there.

PETER. Stuff and nonsense! I haven't been near the bosom of Abraham.

WILLIAM. Too bad you died before you went to the circus, Mr. Grimm. But it must be great to be in a place where you can look down and see the circus for nothing. Do you remember the clown that sang: "Uncle Rat has gone to town"?

PETER. Yes, indeed; but let us talk of something more important. Come here, William (*he starts towards the desk*); would you like to see some one whom all little boys love — love more than anybody else in the whole world?

(*Peter is standing at the desk with his finger on the torn pieces of the picture.*)

WILLIAM. Yes, the clown in the circus. . . . No . . . it isn't a clown; . . . it's our mother. . . . Yes, I want to see my mother, Annamarie. (*Unconsciously William comes to the desk and sees the torn picture — picks up a piece and looks at it. Very simply.*) Why . . . there she is! . . . That's her face.

PETER. Ah! You recognize her. Mother's face is there, William, but it's in little bits. We must put her together, William. We must show her to everybody in the house, so that everybody will say: "How in the world did she ever get here? To whom does this picture belong?" We must set them to thinking.

WILLIAM. Yes. Let us show her to everybody. (*He sits and joins the pieces under the guidance of Peter.*) Annamarie . . . Annamarie . . .

PETER. You remember many things, William . . . things that happened when you lived with Annamarie, don't you?

WILLIAM. I was very little. . . .

PETER. Still, you remember. . . .

WILLIAM (*Evasively*). I was afraid. . . .

PETER. You loved her.

WILLIAM (*To picture*). Oh, yes . . . yes, I loved you.

PETER. Now, through that miracle of love, you can remember many things tucked away in your childish brain, — things laid away in your mind like toys upon a shelf. Come, pick them up and dust them off and bring them out again. It will come back. When you lived with Annamarie . . . there was you . . . and Annamarie . . . and —

WILLIAM. — and the other one.

PETER. Ah! We're getting nearer! Who *was* the other one?

WILLIAM (*Gives a quick glance towards the door — then as though speaking to the picture*). I must put you together before *he* comes back. (*He fits the other pieces together — Peter trying to guide him. Presently William hums as a child will when at play, singing the tune of "Uncle Rat."*) "Uncle Rat has gone to town."

PETER *and* WILLIAM (*Singing together*). "Ha! H'm!"

(*At this instant, Peter is indicating another piece of the picture.*)

WILLIAM. Her other foot. (*Then sings.*)

"Uncle Rat has gone to town,
To buy his niece a wedding gown."

(*Adjusting a piece of the picture.*) Her hand.

WILLIAM *and* PETER (*Singing*). "Ha! H'm!"

WILLIAM. Her other hand. (*Sings.*)

"What shall the wedding breakfast be?
Hard boiled eggs and —"

(*Speaking.*) Where's — (*William pauses — looking for a piece of the picture.*)

PETER (*Finishing the verse*). "A cup of tea."

(*With a gesture as though knocking on the door of the adjoining room to attract Mrs. Batholommey's attention.*)

WILLIAM (*Speaks*). There's her hat.

WILLIAM *and* PETER (*Singing*). "Ha! H'm!"

WILLIAM (*Stops singing and claps his hands with boyish delight — staring at the picture*). Annamarie! Annamarie! You're not in bits any more — you're all put together.

(*By this time, Peter is going up the stairs, and, as he stands in front of Catherine's door, it opens. Peter passes in and Catherine comes out.*)

CATHERINE (*Astonished*). Why, William! What are you doing here?

WILLIAM. Miss Catherine! Come down! Come down! I have something to show you.

CATHERINE (*Not coming down*). No, dear — come upstairs; there's a good boy. You mustn't play down there. Come to bed.

(*Passes into William's room.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Who has entered, and sees William*). William!

WILLIAM. Look — look! (*Pointing to the picture.*) See what old Mr. Grimm brought back with him.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Alarmed*). What are you talking about, William? *Old* Mr. Grimm is dead.

WILLIAM. No, he isn't; . . . he's come back. . . . He has been in this room.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Absurd!

WILLIAM. I was talking to him.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. You're feverish again. I must get the Doctor. (*Comes down to William.*) And I thought you were feeling better! (*Seeing Catherine, who appears on the balcony as though wondering why William doesn't come to bed.*) The child's mind is wandering. He imagines all sorts of things. I'll call the Doctor —

PETER (*Who has re-entered*). You needn't — he's coming now. Come in, Andrew. I'm giving you one more chance.

(*The Doctor enters, wearing his skull-cap, and carrying his pipe in his hand. It is evident that he has come over in a hurry.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Surprised*). I was just going for you. How fortunate that you came.

DR. MACPHERSON. I thought I'd have another peep at William. (*By this time, Catherine has seated herself on a chair, and takes William on her lap. He puts his arms round her neck.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He's quite delirious.

DR. MACPHERSON. Doesn't look it. (*Putting his hand on William's cheek and forehead.*) Very slight fever. What makes you think he was delirious?

(*Taking William's pulse.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Interrupting*). He said that old Mr. Grimm was in this room — that he was talking to him.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Interested*). Yes? Really? Well, possibly he is. Nothing remarkable in *that*, is there?

PETER. Well, at last!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. What? Oh, of course, you believe in —

DR. MACPHERSON. In fact, I had a compact with him to return if —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. A compact? Of all the preposterous —

DR. MACPHERSON. Not at all. Dozens of cases on record — as I can show you — where these compacts have actually been kept. (*Suddenly struck — looking at William.*) I wonder if that boy's a sensitive. (*Hand on his chin.*) I wonder . . .

CATHERINE (*Echoing the Doctor's words*). A sensitive?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. What's that?

DR. MACPHERSON. It's difficult to explain. I mean a human organism so constituted that it can be *informed* or *controlled* by those who — er — have — (*with a gesture*) crossed over.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I think I'll put the boy to bed, Doctor.

DR. MACPHERSON. Just a moment, Mistress Batholommey. I'm here to find out what ails William. William, what makes you think that Mr. Grimm is in this room?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I wouldn't have the child encouraged in such ideas, Catherine. I —

DR. MACPHERSON. Sh! Please, please. (*Taking the boy on his knee.*) What makes you think Peter Grimm is in this room?

WILLIAM (*Hesitating*). . . . The things he said to me.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Said to you?

CATHERINE (*Wonderingly*). William, . . . are you sure he . . .

DR. MACPHERSON. Said to *you*, eh? (*William nods assent.*) *Old* Mr. Grimm? (*William nods.*) Sure of that, William?

WILLIAM. Oh, yes, sir.

DR. MACPHERSON. Think before you speak, my boy; what did Mr. Grimm say to you?

WILLIAM. Lots of things. . . .

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Really!

DR. MACPHERSON (*Raises his hand for silence*). How did he look, William?

WILLIAM. I didn't see him.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Ha!

DR. MACPHERSON. You must have seen something.

WILLIAM. I thought once I saw his hat on the peg where it used to hang. (*Looks at the peg.*) No, it's gone.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Remonstrating*). Doctor!

DR. MACPHERSON (*Thinking*). I wonder if he really did —

CATHERINE. Do you think he could have seen Uncle Peter?

PETER (*Pointing to the desk*). William!

WILLIAM. Look! . . . (*Points to the picture.*) That's what I wanted to show you when you were upstairs.

CATHERINE (*Seeing the picture*). It's his mother — Annamarie.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. The Lord save us — his mother! I didn't know you'd heard from Annamarie.

CATHERINE. We haven't.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Then how'd that picture get into the house?

PETER. Ah! I knew *she'd* begin! Now that she's wound up, we shall get at the truth.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. It's a new picture. She's much changed. How ever did it find its way here?

CATHERINE. I never saw it before. It's very strange. . . . We've all been waiting for news of her. Even her mother doesn't know where she is, or — could Marta have received this since I —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I'll ask her.

(*Exit into dining-room.*)

CATHERINE. If not, who had the picture? . . . And why weren't we *all* told? . . . Who tore it up? Did you, William? (*William shakes his head, meaning "No."*) Who has been at the desk? No one save Frederik . . . Frederik . . . and surely he —

(*She pauses — perplexed.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Re-entering*). No, Marta hasn't heard a word; and, only a few minutes ago, she asked Frederik if some message hadn't come, but he said "No, nothing." I didn't tell her of the picture.

CATHERINE (*Looking at the picture*). I wonder if there was any message with it.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I remember the day that picture came . . . the day your uncle died. . . . It was in a long blue envelope — the size of the picture. . . . I took it from the postman myself because every one was distracted and rushing about. It dropped to the floor and as I picked it up I thought I knew the writing; but I couldn't remember whose it was. . . . It was directed to your uncle. . . . (*Looking from the desk to the wastebasket.*) There's the envelope (*holding up a scrap of blue envelope*) and paper; . . . some one has burned it.

CATHERINE. Annamarie wrote to my uncle . . .

DR. MACPHERSON (*Not understanding*). But what could Peter have to say to *me* concerning Annamarie? (*Making a resolution — rising.*) We're going to find out. You may draw the curtains, Catherine, if you please. (*Catherine draws the curtains. The Doctor turns the lights down and closes the door. A pause.*) Peter Grimm . . .

PETER. Yes, Andrew? . . .

DR. MACPHERSON (*Not hearing*). If you have come back . . . if you are in the room . . . and the boy speaks truly — give me some sign . . . some indication . . .

PETER. I can't give you a sign, Andrew. . . . I have spoken to the boy . . . the boy. . . .

DR. MACPHERSON. If you cannot make your presence known to me — I know there are great difficulties — will you try and send your message by William? I presume you have one —

PETER. Yes, that's right.

DR. MACPHERSON. — or else you wouldn't have come back.

PETER. That's just the point I wanted to make, Andrew. You understand perfectly.

DR. MACPHERSON (*As before*). I am waiting. . . . We are all waiting. (*Noticing that a door is a trifle ajar.*) The door's open again.

(*Mrs. Batholommey, without making a sound, closes it and sits as before.*)

PETER. Sh! Listen!

(*A pause.*)

WILLIAM (*In a peculiar manner — as though in a half dream — but not shutting his eyes. As though controlled by Peter*). There was Annamarie and me and the other.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Very low, as though afraid to interrupt William's train of thought*). What other?

WILLIAM. The man . . . that came.

DR. MACPHERSON. What man?

WILLIAM. The man that made Annamarie cry.

CATHERINE. Who was he?

WILLIAM. I don't know . . .

PETER. Yes, you do. Don't tell lies, William.

DR. MACPHERSON. What man made Annamarie cry?

WILLIAM. I can't remember . . .

PETER. Yes, you can. . . . You're afraid. . . .

CATHERINE (*In a low voice*). So you do remember the time when you lived with Annamarie; . . . you always told me that you didn't . . . (*To Dr. MacPherson.*) I must know more of this — (*Pauses abruptly.*) Think, William, who came to the house?

PETER. That's what *I* asked you, William.

WILLIAM. That's what *he* asked . . .

DR. MACPHERSON. Who?

WILLIAM. Mr. Grimm.

DR. MACPHERSON. When, William?

WILLIAM. Just now . . .

CATHERINE *and* MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Together*). Just now!

DR. MACPHERSON. H'm. . . . You both ask the same question, eh? The man that came to see —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Perplexed*). It can't be possible that the child knows what he's talking about.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Ignoring her*). What did you tell Mr. Grimm when he asked you?

PETER. You'd better make haste, William. Frederik is coming back.

WILLIAM (*Looking uneasily over his shoulder*). I'm afraid. . . .

CATHERINE. Why does he always look towards that door? You're not afraid now, William?

WILLIAM (*Looking towards the door*). N-no — but . . . Please, please don't let Mr. Frederik come back. 'Cause then I'll be afraid again.

DR. MACPHERSON. Ah!

PETER. William! William!

WILLIAM (*Rising quickly*). Yes, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. You must say that I am very unhappy.

WILLIAM. He says he is very unhappy.

DR. MACPHERSON. Why is he unhappy? . . . Ask him.

WILLIAM. Why are you unhappy, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. I am thinking of Catherine's future. . . .

WILLIAM (*Not understanding the last word — puzzled*). Eh?

PETER. To-morrow . . .

WILLIAM (*After a slight pause*). To-morrow . . .

PETER. Catherine's —

WILLIAM (*Looks at Catherine — hesitating*). Your —

(*Stops. Catherine gives the Doctor a quick glance — she seems to divine the message.*)

DR. MACPHERSON (*Prompting*). Her —

CATHERINE. What, William? What of to-morrow?

PETER. She must not marry Frederik.

WILLIAM. I mustn't say *that.*

DR. MACPHERSON. What?

WILLIAM. What he wanted me to say.

(*Points towards Peter. All instinctively look towards the spot to which William points, but they see no one.*)

PETER (*Speaking slowly to the boy*). Catherine — must — not — marry Frederik Grimm.

DR. MACPHERSON. Speak, William. No one will hurt you.

WILLIAM. Oh, yes, *he* will. . . . (*Looking timidly towards the door Frederik passed through.*) I don't want to tell his name — 'cause . . . 'cause . . .

DR. MACPHERSON. Why don't you tell the name, William?

PETER. Make haste, William, make haste.

WILLIAM (*Trembling*). I'm afraid . . . I'm afraid . . . he will make Annamarie cry; . . . he makes me cry . . .

CATHERINE (*With suppressed excitement — half to herself*). Why are you afraid of him? Was Frederik the man that came to see Annamarie?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Catherine!

CATHERINE (*On her knees before William*). Was he? Was it Frederik Grimm? Tell me, William.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Surely you don't believe . . .

CATHERINE (*In a low voice*). I've thought of a great many things to-day . . . little things . . . little things I'd never noticed before. . . . I'm putting them together just as he put that picture together. . . . I must know the truth.

PETER. William, make haste. . . . Frederik is listening at the door.

WILLIAM (*Frightened*). I won't say any more. He's there . . . at the door . . .

(*He looks over his shoulder and Catherine goes towards the door.*)

DR. MACPHERSON. William, tell me.

PETER. William!

(*Catherine opens the door suddenly. Frederik is standing, listening. He is taken unawares and for a few seconds he does not move — then he recovers.*)

WILLIAM. Please don't let him scold me. I'm afraid of him. (*Going towards the stairs — looking at Frederik.*) I was afraid of him when I lived with Annamarie and he came to see us and made her cry.

DR. MACPHERSON. Are you sure you remember that? Weren't you too small?

WILLIAM. No, I *do* remember. . . . I always did remember; only for a little while I — I forgot. . . . I must go to bed. He told me to.

(*Goes upstairs.*)

PETER (*Calling after William*). You're a good boy, William.

(*William goes to his room.*)

CATHERINE (*After a slight pause — simply*). Frederik, you've heard from Annamarie. . . . (*Gestures towards the desk. Frederik sees the photograph and is silent*). You've had a letter from her. You tried to destroy it. Why did you tell Marta that you'd had no message — no news? You went to see her, too. Why did you tell me that you'd never seen her since she went away? Why did you lie to me? Why do you hate that child?

FREDERIK. Are you going to believe what that boy —

CATHERINE. I'm going to find out. I'm going to find out where she is, before I marry you. That child may be right or wrong; but I'm going to know what his mother was to you. I want the truth.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Who has been in thought — now looking up*).

We've heard the truth. We had that message from Peter Grimm himself.

CATHERINE. Yes, it *is* true. I believe Uncle Peter Grimm was in this room to-night.

FREDERIK (*Not surprised — glancing towards the spot where Peter stood when he thought he saw him*). Oh! You, too? Did you see him, too?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Incredulously*). Impossible!

CATHERINE. I don't care what any one else may think — people have the right to think for themselves; but I believe he has been here — he *is* here. Uncle Peter, if you can hear me now, give me back my promise — or — or I'll take it back!

PETER (*Gently — smilingly — relieved*). I did give it back to you, my dear; but what a time I have had getting it across!

CURTAIN

ACT III

The third act takes place at twenty minutes to twelve on the same night.

The fire is out. The table on which Peter took his coffee in the first act is now being used by the Doctor for William's medicines, two bottles, two glasses, two teaspoons, a clinical thermometer, &c. William, who has been questioned by the Doctor, is now asleep upstairs. Peter's hat hangs on the peg in the shadow. Although the hour is late, no one has thought of going to bed. Frederik is waiting at the hotel for the lawyer whom Hicks was to send to arrange for the sale of Peter Grimm's nurseries, but he has not arrived. The Doctor, full of his theories, is seated before the fire, writing the account of Peter Grimm's return, for the American Branch of the "London Society for Psychical Research." It is now a fine, clear night. The clouds are almost silvery and a hint of the moon is showing.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Reading what he has written*). "To be forwarded to the 'London Society for Psychical Research': Dr.

Hyslop: Dear Sir: This evening at the residence of Peter —" (*pauses and inserts "the late" and continues to read after inserting the words*) "— the late Peter Grimm — the well-known horticulturist of Grimm Manor, New York, certain phenomena were observed which would clearly indicate the return of Peter Grimm, ten days after his decease. While he was invisible to all, three people were present besides myself — one of these, a child of eight, who received the message. No spelling out by signals nor automatic writing was employed, but word of mouth." (*A rap sounds.*) Who will that be at this hour? . . . (*Looks at the clock.*) Nearly midnight. (*Opening the door.*) Yes?

A VOICE (*Outside*). Telegram for Frederik Grimm.

DR. MACPHERSON. Not in. I'll sign. (*He signs and, receiving the telegram, sets it against a candlestick on the desk and resumes his seat. Reads:*) "I made a compact with Peter Grimm, while he was in the flesh, that whichever went first was to return and give the other some sign; and I propose to give positive proof —" (*he hesitates — thinks — then repeats*) "positive proof that he kept this compact and that I assisted in the carrying out of his instructions."

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Enters — evidently highly wrought up by the events of the evening*). Who was that? Who knocked?

DR. MACPHERSON. Telegram.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I thought perhaps Frederik had come back. Don't you consider William much better?

DR. MACPHERSON. Mm . . .

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Dear, dear! The scene that took place to-night has completely upset me. (*The Doctor takes up his pen and reads to himself.*) Well, Doctor: (*she pushes forward a chair and sits at the other side of the table — facing him*) the breaking off of the engagement is rather sudden, isn't it? We've been talking it over in the front parlour, Mr. Batholommey and I. James has finished his work and has just joined us. I suggest sending out a card — a neat card — saying that, owing to the bereavement in the family, the wedding has been indefinitely postponed. Of course, it isn't exactly true.

DR. MACPHERSON. Won't take place at all.
(*Goes on reading.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Evidently not; but if the whole matter looks very strange to me — how is it going to look to other people; especially when we haven't any — any rational explanation — as yet? We must get out of it in some fashion.

DR. MACPHERSON. Whose business is it?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Nobody's, of course. But Catherine's position is certainly unusual; and the strangest part of it all is — she doesn't seem to feel her situation. She's sitting alone in the library, seemingly placid and happy. What I really wish to consult you about is this: shouldn't the card we're going to send out have a narrow black border? (*The Doctor is now writing.*) Doctor, you don't appear to be interested. You might at least answer my question.

DR. MACPHERSON. What chance have I had to answer? You've done all the talking.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Rising — annoyed*). Oh, of course, all these little matters sound trivial to you; but men like you couldn't look after the workings of the *next* world if other people didn't attend to *this*. Some one has to do it.

DR. MACPHERSON. I fully appreciate the fact, Mistress Batholommey, that other people are making it possible for me to be myself. I'll admit that; and now if I might have a few moments in peace to attend to something really important — (*The Rev. Mr. Batholommey has entered with his hat in his hand.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Doctor, I've been thinking things over. I ran in for a moment to suggest that we suspend judgment until the information William has volunteered can be verified. I can scarcely believe that —

DR. MACPHERSON. Ump! (*Rises and goes to the telephone on the desk.*) Four-red.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I regret that Frederik left the house without offering some explanation.

DR. MACPHERSON (*At the 'phone*). Marget, I'm at Peter's. I

mean — I'm at the Grimms'. Send me my bag. I'll stay the night with William. Bye.

(*Seats himself at the table.*)

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Tell Frederik that, if he cares to consult me, I shall be at home in my study. Good-night, Doctor. Good-night, Rose.

DR. MACPHERSON. Hold on, Mr. Batholommey! (*The Rev. Mr. Batholommey turns.*) I'm writing an account of all that's happened here to-night —

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Dubiously*). Indeed!

DR. MACPHERSON. I shall verify every word of the evidence by William's mother for whom I am searching. (*The Rev. Mr. Batholommey smiles faintly behind his hand.*) Then I shall send in my report, and not until then. What I wish to ask is this: would you have any objection to the name of Mrs. Batholommey being used as a witness?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Looks perplexed*). Well, — er — a —

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Oh, no, you don't! You may flout our beliefs; but wouldn't you like to bolster up your report with "the wife of a clergyman who was present!" It sounds so respectable and sane, doesn't it? No, sir! You cannot prop up your wild-eyed —

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose, my dear!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Sweeping on*). — theories against the good black of a minister's coat. *I* think myself that you have *probably* stumbled on the truth about William's mother.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. *Can* it be true? Oh, dreadful! Dreadful!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. But that child knew it all along. He's eight years old and he was with her until five — and five's the age of memory. Every incident of his mother's life has lingered in his little mind. Supposing you do find her and learn that it's all true: what do you prove? Simply that *William remembered*, and that's all there is to it.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Let us hope that there's not a word of truth in it. Don't you think, Doctor — mind, I'm not

opposing your ideas as a clergyman, — I'm just echoing what *everybody else* thinks — don't you believe these spiritualistic ideas, leading *away* from the heaven *we* were taught to believe in, tend towards irresponsibility — er — eccentricity — and — often — er — insanity? Is it healthy — that's the idea — is it healthy?

DR. MACPHERSON. Well, Batholommey, religion has frequently led to the stake, and I never heard of the Spanish Inquisition being called *healthy* for anybody taking part in it. Still, religion flourishes. But your old-fashioned, unscientific, gilt, ginger-bread heaven blew up ten years ago — went out. My heaven's just coming in. It's new. Dr. Funk and a lot of the clergymen are in already. You'd better get used to it, Batholommey, and get in line and into the procession.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. You'll have to convince me first, Doctor — and that no man can do. I made up my mind at twenty-one, and my heaven is just where it was then.

DR. MACPHERSON. So I see. It hasn't improved a particle.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY (*Tolerantly*). Well, well. Good-night.

(*Mrs. Batholommey follows him in the hall.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Good-night, Henry; I'll be home to-morrow. You'll be glad to see me, dear, won't you?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. My church mouse!

(*He pats her cheek, kisses her good-night and goes.*)

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY (*Who has gone to the door of her room — giving Dr. MacPherson a parting shot*). Write as much as you like, Doctor; words are but air. We didn't see Peter Grimm and you know and I know and everybody knows that *seeing* is believing.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Looking up*). Damn everybody! It's everybody's ignorance that has set the world back a thousand years. Where was I before you — Oh, yes. (*Reads as Mrs. Batholommey leaves the room.*) "I assisted in the carrying out of his instructions."

(*Frederik Grimm enters.*)

FREDERIK. Anybody in this house come to their senses yet?

DR. MACPHERSON. I think so, my boy. I think several in

this house have come to their senses. Catherine has, for one. I'm very glad to see you back, Frederik. I have a few questions to put to you.

FREDERIK. Why don't you have more light? It's half dark in this room. (*He picks up the lamp from the Doctor's table and holds it so that he can look searchingly in the direction of the desk to see if Peter's apparition is still there. His eye is suddenly riveted on the telegram resting against the candlestick on the desk.*) Is that telegram for me?

DR. MACPHERSON. Yes.

FREDERIK. Oh. . . . It may explain perhaps why I've been kept waiting at the hotel. . . . (*Tries to go to the desk but cannot muster up courage.*) I had an appointment to meet a man who wanted to buy the gardens. I may as well tell you, I'm thinking of selling out root and branch.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Amazed*). Selling out? Peter Grimm's gardens? So this is the end of Peter's great work?

FREDERIK. You'll think it strange, Doctor; but I — I simply can't make up my mind to go near that old desk of my uncle's. . . . I have a perfect terror of the thing! Would you mind handing me that telegram? (*The Doctor looks at him with scarcely veiled contempt, and hands him the telegram. After a glance at the contents, Frederik gives vent to a long-drawn breath.*) Billy Hicks — the man I was to sell to — is dead. . . . (*Tosses the telegram across the table towards Dr. MacPherson, who does not take it. It lies on the table.*) I knew it this afternoon! I knew he would die . . . but I wouldn't let myself believe it. Some one told it to me . . . whispered it to me . . . Doctor, as sure as you live — somebody else is doing my thinking for me in this house.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Studying Frederik*). What makes you say that?

FREDERIK. To-night — in this room, I thought I saw my uncle . . . (*pointing towards the desk*) there.

DR. MACPHERSON. Eh? . . .

FREDERIK. And just before I — I saw him — I — I had the . . . the strangest impulse to go to the foot of the stairs and

call Kitty — give her the house — and run — run — get out of it.

DR. MACPHERSON. Oh, a good impulse, I see! Very unusual, I should say.

FREDERIK. I thought he gave me a terrible look — a terrible look.

DR. MACPHERSON. Your uncle?

FREDERIK. Yes. My God! I won't forget that look! And as I started out of the room — he blotted out. . . . I mean — I *thought* I saw him blot out; . . . then I left the photograph on the desk and —

DR. MACPHERSON. That's how William came by it. (*Jots down a couple of notes.*) Did you ever have this impulse before — to give up Catherine — to let her have the cottage?

FREDERIK. Not much, I hadn't. Certainly not. I told you some one else was thinking for *me*. I don't want to give her up. It's folly! I've always been fond of her. But if she has turned against me, I'm not going to sit here and cry about it. I shall be up and off. (*Rising.*) But I'll tell you one thing: from this time, I propose to think for myself. I've taken a room at the hotel and a few things for the night. I've done with this house. I'd like to sell it along with the gardens, and let a stranger raze it to the ground; but — (*thinks as he looks towards the desk*) when I walk out of here to-night — it's hers — she can have it. . . . I wouldn't sleep here. . . . I give her the home because . . .

DR. MACPHERSON. Because you don't believe anything; but you want to be on the safe side in case he — (*gesturing to desk*) was there.

FREDERIK (*Puzzled — awed — his voice almost dropping to a whisper*). How do you account for it, Doctor?

DR. MACPHERSON. It might have been an hallucination or perhaps you did see him, though it could have been inflammation of conscience, Frederik: when did you last see Annamarie?

FREDERIK (*Angrily*). Haven't I told you already that I refuse to answer any questions as to my —

DR. MACPHERSON. I think it only fair to tell you that it won't make a particle of difference whether you answer me or not. I have some one on the track now — working from an old address; I've called in the detectives and I'll find her, you may be sure of that. As long as I'm going to know it, I may as well hear your side of it, too. When did you last see Annamarie?

FREDERIK (*Sits — answers dully, mechanically, after a pause*). About three years ago.

DR. MACPHERSON. Never since?

FREDERIK. No.

DR. MACPHERSON. What occurred the last time you saw her?

FREDERIK (*Quietly, as before*). What *always* occurs when a young man realizes that he has his life before him, must be respected — looked up to, settle down, think of his future and forget a silly girl?

DR. MACPHERSON. A scene took place, eh? Was William present?

FREDERIK. Yes. She held him in her arms.

DR. MACPHERSON. And then?

FREDERIK. I left the house.

DR. MACPHERSON. Then it's all true. (*Frederik is silent.*) What are you going to do for William?

FREDERIK. Nothing. I'm a rich man now — and if I recognize him — he'll be at me till the day he dies. His mother's gone to the dogs and under her influence, the boy —

DR. MACPHERSON. Be silent, you damned young scoundrel. Oh! What an act of charity if the good Lord took William, and I say it with all my heart. Out of all you have — not a crumb for —

FREDERIK. I want you to know I've sweat for that money, and I'm going to keep it!

DR. MACPHERSON. *You've* sweat for —

FREDERIK (*Showing feeling*). — Yes! How do you think I got the money? I went to jail for it — jail, jail. Every day I've been in this house has been spent in prison. I've been doing time. Do you think it didn't get on my nerves? I've gone

to bed at nine o'clock and thought of what I was missing in New York. I've got up at cock-crow to be in time for grace at the breakfast table. I took charge of a class in Sabbath-school, and I handed out the infernal cornucopias at the church Christmas tree, while he played Santa Claus. What more can a fellow do to earn his money? Don't you call that sweating? No, sir; I've danced like a damned hand-organ monkey for the pennies he left me, and I had to grin and touch my hat and make believe I liked it. Now I'm going to spend every cent for my own personal pleasure.

DR. MACPHERSON. Will rich men never learn wisdom!

FREDERIK (*Rising*). No, they won't! But in every fourth generation there comes along a *wise* fellow — a spender who knows how to distribute the money others have hoarded: I'm the spender.

DR. MACPHERSON. Shame upon you and your like! Your breed should be exterminated.

FREDERIK (*Taking a little packet of letters from the desk*). Oh, no, we're quite as necessary as you are. And now — I shall answer no more questions. I'm done. Good-night, Doctor.

DR. MACPHERSON. Good-night and good-by. (*With a look of disgust, he has gone to the table, held a medicine bottle to the light to look at the label and poured a spoonful into a wine-glass filled with water. As Frederik leaves the house, the Doctor taps on a door and calls.*) Catherine! (*Catherine enters, and shows by the glance she directs at the front door that she knows Frederik has been in the room and has just left the house.*) Burn up your wedding dress. We've made no mistake. I can tell you *that!*

(*Goes up the stairs to William's room, taking the lamp with him. James has entered, and, taking Catherine's hand, holds it for a moment.*)

JAMES. Good-night, Catherine.

(*She turns and lays her hand on his shoulder.*)

CATHERINE. I wonder, James, if *he* can see us now.

JAMES. That's the big mystery! . . . Who can tell? But any man who works with flowers and things that grow —

knows there is no such thing as death — there's nothing but life — life and always life. I'll be back in the morning. . . . Won't you . . . see me to the door?

CATHERINE. Yes . . . yes. . . . (*They go up together, Catherine carrying a candle into the dark vestibule. The moment they disappear, a lamp standing on the piano goes out as though the draught from the door or an unseen hand had extinguished it. It is now quite dark outside, and the moon is hidden for a moment. At the same time, a light, seemingly coming from nowhere, reveals Peter Grimm standing in the room at the door — as though he had been there when the young people passed out. He is smiling and happy. The moon is not seen, but the light of it — as though it had come out from behind a cloud — now reveals the old windmill. From outside the door the voices of James and Catherine are heard as they both say:*) Good-night.

JAMES. Catherine, . . . I won't go without it. . . .

PETER (*Knowing that James is demanding a kiss*). Aha! (*Rubs his hands in satisfaction — then listens — and after a second pause exclaims, with an upraised finger, as though he were hearing the kiss.*) Ah! Now I can go. . . .

(*He walks to the peg on which his hat hangs, and takes it down. His work is done. Catherine re-enters, darting into the hall in girlish confusion.*)

JAMES' HAPPY VOICE (*Outside*). Good-night!

CATHERINE (*Calling to him through the crack in the door*). Good-night! (*She closes the door, turns the key and draws the heavy bolt — then leans against the door, candlestick in hand — the wind has blown out the candle.*) Oh, I'm so happy! I'm *so* happy!

PETER. Then good-night to you, my darling: love cannot say good-by. (*She goes to Peter's chair, and, sitting, thinks it all over — her hands clasped in her lap — her face radiant with happiness.*) Here in your childhood's home I leave you. Here in the years to come, the way lies clear before you. (*His arm upraised.*) "*Lust in Rust*" — Pleasure and Peace go with you. (*Catherine looks towards the door — remembering James' kiss — half smiling.*) (*Humorously.*) Y — es; I

saw you. I heard . . . I know. . . . Here on some sunny, blossoming day when, as a wife, you look out upon my gardens — every flower and tree and shrub shall bloom enchanted to your eyes. . . . All that happens — happens again. And if, at first, a little knock of poverty taps at the door, and James finds the road hard and steep — what is money? — a thing, — a good thing to have, — but still a thing . . . and happiness will come without it. And when, as a mother, you shall see my plantings with new eyes, my Catherine, — when you explain each leaf and bud to your little people — you will remember the time when *we* walked together through the leafy lanes and I taught you — even as you teach them — you little thing! . . . So, I shall linger in your heart. And some day, should your children wander far away and my gardens blossom for a stranger who may take my name from off the gates, — what *is* my name? Already it grows faint to my ears. (*Lightly.*) Yes, yes, yes, let others take my work. . . . Why should *we* care? All that happens, happens again. (*She rests her elbow on the chair, half hides her face in her hand.*) And never forget this: I shall be waiting for you — I shall know all your life. I shall adore your children and be their grandfather just as though I were here; I shall find it hard not to laugh at them when they are bad, and I shall worship them when they are good — and I don't want them too good. . . . Frederik was good. . . . I shall be everywhere about you . . . in the stockings at Christmas, in a big, busy, teeming world of shadows just outside your threshold, or whispering in the still noises of the night. . . . And oh! as the years pass, (*standing over her chair*) you cannot imagine what pride I shall take in your comfortable middle life — the very *best* age, I think — when you two shall look out on your possessions arm in arm — and take your well-earned comfort and ease. How I shall love to see you look fondly at each other as you say: "Be happy, Jim — you've worked hard for this;" or James says: "Take your comfort, little mother, let them all wait upon *you* — *you* waited upon *them*. Lean back in your carriage — you've

earned it!" And towards the end — (*sitting on a chair by her side and looking into her face*) after all the luxuries and vanities and possessions cease to be so important — people return to very simple things, dear. The evening of life comes bearing its own lamp. Then, perhaps, as a little old grandmother, a little old child whose bed-time is drawing near, I shall see you happy to sit out in the sunlight of another day; asking nothing more of life than the few hours to be spent with those you love, . . . telling your grandchildren, at your knees, how much brighter the flowers blossomed when *you* were young. Ha! Ha! Ha! All that happens, happens again. . . . And when, one glad day, glorified, radiant, young once more, the mother and I shall take you in our arms, — oh! what a reunion! (*Inspired.*) The flight of love — to love. . . . And now . . . (*he bends over her and caresses her hand*) good-night.

(*Catherine rises and, going to the desk, buries her face in the bunch of flowers placed there in memory of Peter.*)

CATHERINE. Dear Uncle Peter. . . .

(*Marta enters — pausing to hear if all is quiet in William's room. Catherine, lifting her face, sees Marta and rapturously hugs her, to Marta's amazement — then goes up the stairs.*)

PETER (*Whose eyes never leave Catherine*). "*Lust in Rust!*" Pleasure and Peace! Amen! (*Catherine passes into her room, the music dying away as her door closes. Marta, still wondering, goes to the clock and winds it.*) Poor Marta! every time she thinks of me, she winds my clock. We're not quite forgotten.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Re-appears, carrying William, now wrapped up in an old-fashioned Dutch patchwork quilt. The Doctor has a lamp in his free hand*). So you want to go downstairs, eh? Very good! How do you feel, laddie?

WILLIAM. New all over.

DR. MACPHERSON (*Placing the lamp on the little table right, and laying William on the couch*). Now I'll get you the glass of cold water.

(*Goes into the dining-room, leaving the door open.*)

Photo. Byron, N. Y.

Scene from THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

THE CLOWN. "Circus day comes but once a year, little sir."

PETER (*Calling after the Doctor*). Good-night, Andrew. I'm afraid the world will have to wait a little longer for the *big* guesser. Drop in often. I shall be glad to see you here.

WILLIAM (*Quickly rising on the couch, looks towards the peg on which Peter Grimm's hat hung. Calling*). Mr. Grimm! Where are you? I knew that you were down here. (*Seeing Peter.*) Oh, (*raising himself to his knees on the sofa*) I see you *now!*

PETER. Yes?

(*There is an impressive pause and silence as they face each other.*)

WILLIAM. Oh, you've got your hat; . . . it's off the peg. . . . You're going. Need you go right away — Mr. Grimm? Can't you wait a little while?

PETER. I'll wait for you, William.

WILLIAM. May I go with you? Thank you. I couldn't find the way without you.

PETER. Yes, you could. It's the surest way in this world. But I'll wait, — don't worry.

WILLIAM. I sha'n't. (*Coaxingly.*) Don't be in a hurry . . . I want — (*lies down happily*) to take a nap first. . . . I'm sleepy.

(*He pulls the covering up and sleeps.*)

PETER. I wish you the pleasantest dream a little boy can have in *this* world.

(*Instantly, as though the room were peopled with faint images of William's dream, the phantom circus music is heard, with its elfin horns; and, through the music, voices call "Hai! Hai!" The sound of the cracking of a whip is heard, and the blare of a clown's ten-cent tin horn. The phantom voice of the Clown — very faint — calls:*)

CLOWN'S VOICE. Billy Miller's big show and monster circus is in town this afternoon! Don't forget the date! Only one ring — no confusion. Circus day comes but once a year, little sir. Come early and see the wild animals and hear the lion roar-r-r! Mind, I shall expect *you!* Wonderful troupe of trained mice in the side-show.

(*During the above, the deeper voice of a "Hawker" — muffled and far off — cries:*)

HAWKER'S VOICE. Peanuts, pop-corn, lemonade — ice cold lemo — lemo — lemonade! Circus day comes but once a year.

(*Breaking in through the music, and the voices of the Clown and Hawker, the gruff voice of a "Barker" is heard calling:*)

BARKER'S VOICE. Walk in and see the midgets and the giant! Only ten cents — one dime!

(*As these voices die away, the Clown, whose voice indicates that he is now perched on the head of the couch, sings:*)

CLOWN'S VOICE.

"Uncle Rat has gone to town,
Ha! H'm!
Uncle Rat has gone to town
To buy his niece" —

(*His voice ends abruptly — the music stops. Everything is over. There is silence. Then three clear knocks sound on the door.*)

PETER. Come in. . . . (*The door opens. No one is there — but a faint path of phosphorus light is seen.*) Oh, friends! Troops of you! (*As though he recognizes the unseen guests.*) I've been gone so long that you came for me, eh? I'm quite ready to go back. I'm just waiting for a happy little fellow who's going back with us. . . . We'll follow. Do you all go ahead — lead the way. (*He looks at William, holds out his arms, and William jumps up and runs into them.*) Well, William! You *know better* now. Come! (*Picking up William.*) Happy, eh?

(*William nods, his face beaming.*)

WILLIAM. Oh, yes!

PETER. Let's be off, then.

(*As they turn towards the door.*)

DR. MACPHERSON (*Re-entering, goes to the couch with the water, and suddenly, setting down the glass, exclaims in a hushed voice:*) My God! He's dead!

(*He half raises up a boy that appears to be William. The light*

from the lamp on the table falls on the dead face of the child. Then the Doctor gently lays the boy down again on the couch, and sits pondering over the mystery of death.)

PETER (*To the Doctor*). Oh, no! There never was so fair a prospect for *life!*

WILLIAM (*In Peter's arms*). I *am* happy!

(*Outside a hazy moonlight shimmers. A few stars twinkle in the far-away sky; and the low moon is seen back of the old windmill.*)

PETER (*To William*). If the rest of them only knew what they're missing, eh?

WILLIAM (*Begins to sing, joyously*).

"Uncle Rat has gone to town."

(*Peter dances up a few steps towards the door, singing with William.*)

PETER *and* WILLIAM.

"Ha! H'm!
Uncle Rat has gone to town
To buy his niece a wedding gown.
Ha! H'm!"

PETER (*Gives one last fond look towards Catherine's room. To William.*) We're off!

(*Putting the boy over his shoulder, they sing together, as they go up, the phantom circus music accompanying them.*)

"What shall the wedding breakfast be?
Ha! H'm!"

PETER (*Alone*).

"What shall the wedding breakfast be?
Hard boiled eggs and a cup of tea."

WILLIAM *and* PETER. "Ha! H'm!"

(*Peter Grimm has danced off with the child through the faint path of light. As he goes, the wind or an unseen hand closes the door after them. There is a moment's pause until their voices are no longer heard — then the curtain slowly descends. The air of the song is taken up by an unseen orchestra and continues as the audience passes out.*)

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